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PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

THURSDAY, APRIL 5, 2001 ★ 38 PAGES 3 SECTIONS VOL.16 NO. 118 ₱15

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By Gerald G. Lacuarta

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and Volt Contreras

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PDI Visayas Bureau
Dona Pazzibugan,
Agnes Donato and TJ Burgonio

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“It is up to God. We leave our fate to God,” said the mayor whose father was ousted for his alleged involvement in illegal gambling and massive graft and corruption.

“This is not only tragic for the President (Joseph Estrada), but also for the 11 million voters who put him to power,” the mayor said.

The ousted President said he was “frustrated” because he “banked on the fairness of the Supreme Court.”

“I thought the rule of law would prevail but I was denied the rule of law. I was not given a chance to defend myself. I am President but was not given due process. I will exhaust all legal means. I will face all the charges, most of which are fabricated,” Estrada said.

In a statement, he said “the decision was an affirmation of mob rule and a birthday gift to Mrs. Arroyo by the Supreme Court.”

Estrada reiterated that he would not leave the country. “I was born here, I will die here.”

Estrada left for Roxas City to campaign anew for the senatorial candidates of the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino-Puwersa ng Masa, looking sad and worn-out.

LOI/ A14

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PDI Visayas Bureau
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“There were no shouting matches” during the Nov. 22 meeting, she said, contrary to reports that her sister Ampy had said that Estrada had berated Dacer. Ampy and her husband were with Dacer at the Palace that night.

Ampy, Karina and another sister, Emily, are together in California, while a fourth, Sabina, is in Manila.

Karina said that while Dacer and Estrada’s conversation touched on a couple of minor resentments—“*may konting tampuhan*”—the exchange was generally “about the good old days.”

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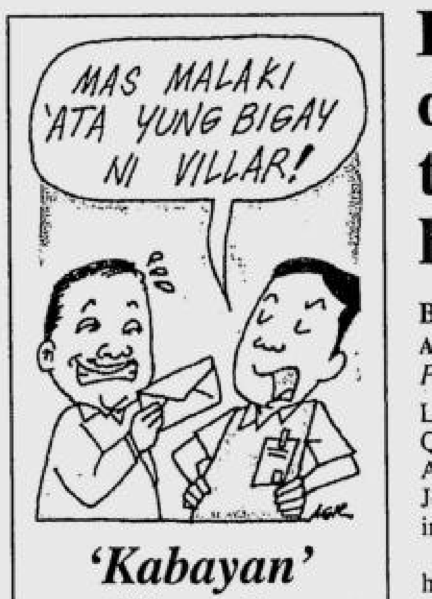
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“If this Jonathan, who claims that he is my associate, meets me face to face, I’m sure he will not recognize me. Why? Because he does not know me and I don’t know him,” said Alcala, whose real first name is Cerilo and not Atilano or Atelino as earlier reported.

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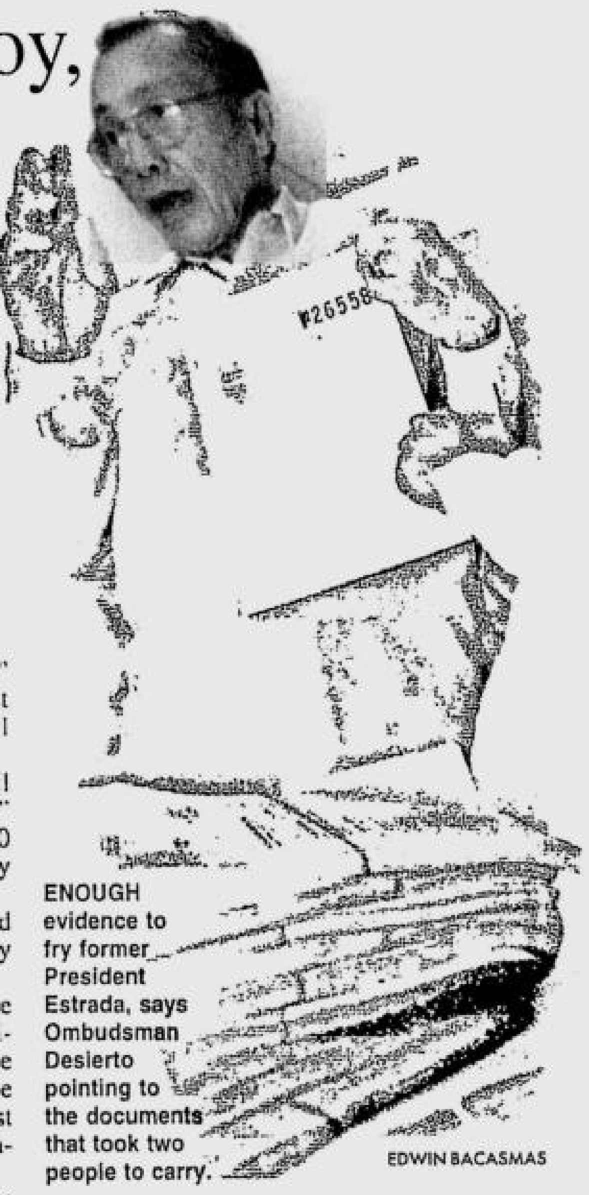

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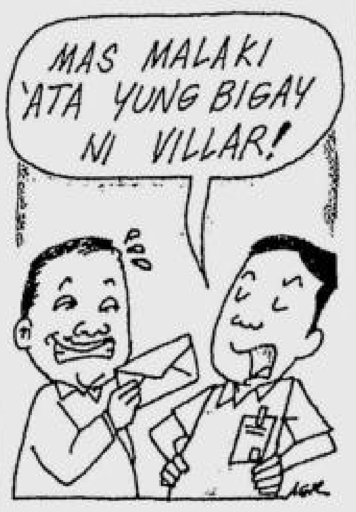

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DRUG/ A14

Second FRONT PAGE

BUTI NA LANG PALA AT NAG-LABAS NA NG DESISYON ANG KORTE !

Gunmen kill 3 in graduation attack

COTABATO CITY—Three persons, including a policeman, were killed while several civilians, including children, were wounded when armed men fired at people attending graduation ceremonies in Kabuntalan, Maguindanao, yesterday.

Survivors said the attackers could be after a mayoral candidate in Kabuntalan.

Engineer Mohammad Salic said seven gunmen emerged from nowhere and fired their automatic rifles at some 500 people witnessing the graduation rites at the Barangay Maitum Elementary School at about 1:30 p.m.

"The suspects were shooting at the area where one politician was sitting," Salic said, adding that the suspects wore ski masks and were armed with M-14 and M-16 rifles.

Salic failed to identify the politician.

"Everybody was on the ground, everybody was looking for cover to avoid being hit," Salic told Radio dxMS here.

He recalled that the shooting lasted for about 10 minutes, "I believed it was politically motivated because the target was the politician," Salic said.

Kabuntalan is one of the areas under close watch by the military in the coming elections.

Salic identified the fatalities as PO1 Sahid Sangcad, Randy Pananggulong, 24, and Pikit Salic, 58.

The Army's 6th Infantry Division has sent a team of soldiers to the area.

Edwin O. Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Stock market stays firm, but peso slips

By Doris C. Dumlao and Clarissa S. Batino

THE SUPREME Court decision affirming with finality the legitimacy of the Macapagal-Arroyo administration prevented the turmoil in Wall Street and regional bourses from triggering a free fall in the domestic stock market.

But it was not able to do the same for the peso, which yesterday breached the P50 level for the first time in the two months since the accession of the new Macapagal-Arroyo administration.

The peso closed at P50.165 to the dollar because of the slump in regional currencies, especially the Thai baht.

Traders explained that with the short-lived euphoria over the change in government wearing off, the peso has again become vulnerable to regional events and the continued depreciation of Asia's anchor currency, the Japanese yen.

The 33-share Philippine Stock Exchange composite index yesterday closed relatively firm at 1,452.12, or only 0.01 percent lower than Tuesday's level, notwithstanding the sharp falls in the United States and Asian stock markets. Value turnover remained thin at P318 million, however.

'Tremendous feat'

Brokers said the sideways movement in the index was a "tremendous feat" against the 6.12 percent and 2.99 percent fall in the Nasdaq and Dow Jones indices, respectively, on Tuesday night.

"The Supreme Court ruling mitigated the fall. It could have been much worse. The market is strong considering the fall in the US markets," Eagle Equities president Joseph Roxas said.

The high tribunal dismissed ousted President Joseph Estrada's motion for reconsideration of its ruling upholding the legitimacy of the Macapagal-Arroyo administration and rejecting Estrada's claim to immunity from prosecution.

The decision removed all legal obstacles to the filing of charges of corruption and economic plunder against Estrada.

Luz Lorenzo, head of research at ATR Kim Eng Securities, agreed that the good news from the SC could have insulated the stock market from the steep declines on Wall Street and elsewhere in the region.

"Its (the SC ruling) significance is that it now allows a test of the judicial system. If the Estrada criminal trial is able to proceed... and is perceived as credible by the greater number of the population, this will be a strong indication of the kind of governance that can be expected from the Macapagal-Arroyo government," Lorenzo said.

Eric Claudio, head of research of Worldsec International Securities (Phils), the anticipation is that the market would become bullish again once the Dow, which has been so volatile, stabilizes.

No cause for panic

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael Buenaventura said the recent volatility of the peso should not be a cause for panic as it is being caused by regional economic developments.

This was not so during the previous Estrada administration when it was political uncertainty that was pushing the currency down, he said.

A treasury officer from a foreign bank believes a downward movement in the Japanese yen and the Thai baht could affect the peso.

"If this happens, the peso could go past the P51 level. We cannot disassociate ourselves from the yen," said the bank officer.

The Japanese yen was trading between ¥125 to ¥126 to $1 yesterday while the Thai baht was moving along Bht45.50 to the dollar. The peso, as a result, went down to P50.165 to $1 from P49.73 the day before.

A trader said new strains in the US-China relations last week might have also contributed to the weakness of regional currencies.

A bank analyst said the yen factor is making a BSP forecast that the peso would average at P46 to $1 this year even harder to achieve.

Chavit gets immunity

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE JUETENGATE whistleblower, Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson, the man credited for helping topple the Estrada administration, was amply rewarded by the government after the Ombudsman finally granted him immunity from suit.

Ombudsman Aniano Desierto announced in a press conference yesterday that his office would not file formal charges against Singson despite his own admission that he personally gained from the jueteng operations in the North.

Desierto pointed out that the immunity privilege offered by the State under Presidential Decree No. 749 had automatically clothed Singson when he testified against his former drinking buddy before the Senate Blue Ribbon Committee and later during the aborted impeachment trial.

"The offfice of the Ombudsman conceded that without Singson, the State would find it difficult to prove in court many of the crimes ascribed to Estrada," Desierto said.

However, Desierto also cleared Sen. John Osmeña and Tessie Aquino-Oreta from any wrongdoing even after they admitted receiving P1 million each from Singson reportedly as a *balato* from Estrada's mahjong winnings.

"We found no sufficient evidence to hold the two senators liable for accepting P1 million *balato* in April 1999," he said.

Desierto said Osmeña claimed the money was actually a reimbursement for the expenses he incurred when Estrada and his friends went to Cebu as part of the political activities of LAMP.

Oreta, for her part, said she accepted the money from the assumption that it came from valid sources. She claimed she did not benefit from the money since she allegedly donated it to a teachers' cooperative in Region 7.

3 oil firms cut LPG prices too

INDUSTRY leaders Pilipinas Shell, Caltex and Total yesterday followed Petron's lead in bringing down prices of liquefied petroleum gas by P16.50 per 11-kg cylinder.

This means retail LPG prices would go down to between P255 and P265 per cylinder, from between P270 and P280.

With the leading domestic LPG suppliers rolling back LPG prices, other industry players like Liquigaz Phil. Corp. and Pryce Gases are expected to follow suit.

Energy Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho said the LPG price movements were "very good."

This was what was supposed to happen in a deregulated industry, he said.

"These companies rolled back their prices and I did not even talk to them," Camacho said.

Ronnel W. Domingo

Now On Its 26th Year!

THE P5.564 MILLION

SEC. GUILLERMO DE VEGA

SCHOLARSHIP GRANTS for ENGINEERING and ARCHITECTURE

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The competitive examinations to choose the recipients of these scholarship grants are open to bonafide public or private high school graduates with 80% or above general average in 4th year H.S. or 80% or above final grade in any of the following subjects: Math IV, Science IV, or English IV. The grants are as follows:

1st Placer * - Outlay of P50,000.00 to cover fifty (50) monthly stipends of P1,000.00 per month through five (5) school years for board and lodging, books, transportation and other miscellaneous expenses, plus an outlay of P120,000.00 to cover tuition and other basic miscellaneous fees throughout the course in Architecture or in any of the five or four-year Engineering courses requiring board examinations offered at the Technological Institute of the Philippines.......P170,000.00

2nd to 41st Placers* - Outlay of P 120,000.00 for each of the forty (40) scholars to cover tuition and other basic miscellaneous fees throughout the course in any of the five or four-year courses requiring board examinations offered at the Technological Institute of the Philippines.......P4,800,000.00

42nd to 101st Placers** - Outlay of P 9,900.00 for each of the sixty (60) scholars to cover tuition and other basic miscellaneous fees for one (1) semester in any of the five or four-year courses requiring board examinations offered at the Technological Institute of the Philippines.......P594,000.00

TOTAL.......P5,564,000.00

WHERE TO FILE APPLICATION
Office of the Registrar, TECHNOLOGICAL INSTITUTE OF THE PHILIPPINES
938 Aurora Blvd., Cubao, Quezon City
Applicants should bring their Form 138 and 2 copies of 2x2 ID photos
DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION is Friday, May 4, 2001
SCHEDULE OF COMPETITIVE EXAMINATIONS IN MATHEMATICS AND ENGLISH
9:00 to 11:00 a.m., Saturday • May 5, 2001 • TIP Quezon City

* The scholar loses his scholarship if he obtains a final grade of 4.00, 5.00, 6.00, or 7.00 in any subject including P.E. and ROTC in any semester or if he commits any infraction of the General Rules of Conduct and Discipline

** The scholar may retain his scholarship in the succeeding semester subject to the Rules and Regulations on Resident Scholarships and Grants.

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Stipend of P1,000 per semester for two (2) semesters.

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Stipend of P1,000 for one (1) semester.

3rd to 10th ranking H.S. graduates...Free tuition and basic miscellaneous fees for one (1) semester excluding development fee, computer fee and ID fee.

90% or above general average in 4th Year High School or 90% or above final grade in any of the following subjects. Math IV, English IV, or Science IV	Free tuition and basic miscellaneous fees for one (1) semester excluding development fee, computer fee and ID fee.
85% - 89% general average in 4th Year High School or 85% - 89% final grade in any of the following subjects: Math IV, English IV, or Science IV.	Free tuition fee for one (1) semester.
83% - 84% general average in 4th Year High School or 83% - 84% final grade in any of the following subjects: Math IV, English IV, or Science IV.	80% tuition fee discount for one (1) semester.
81% - 82% general average in 4th Year High School or 81%-82% final grade in any of the following subjects: Math IV, English IV, or Science IV.	60% tuition fee discount for one (1) semester.
80% general average in 4th Year High School or 80% final grade in any of the following subjects: Math IV, English IV, or Science IV	50% tuition fee discount for one (1) semester

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BANK OF THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS
Makati City, Metro Manila

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF STOCKHOLDERS

April 19, 2001

To The Stockholders:

Pursuant to Article IV of the By-Laws of the Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI), notice is hereby given that the Annual Meeting of the Stockholders of BPI will be held at the Grand Ballroom, Hotel Inter-Continental, Makati City, Metro Manila. on Thursday, April 19, 2001, at 9:00 o'clock in the morning, for the transaction of the following business:

1. Calling of Meeting to Order.
2. Certification of Notice.
3. Roll Call of Stockholders.
4. Determination and declaration of quorum.
5. Reading and approval of the minutes of the Annual Meeting of Stockholders on May 15, 2000.
6. Reading of Annual Report and approval of the Bank's Statement of Condition as of 31 December 2000 incorporated in the Annual Report.
7. Approval and confirmation of all acts during the past year of the Board of Directors, Executive Committee, Audit Committee, Trust Committee, Pension Committee, and other Board and Management Committees, and Officers of BPI.
8. Election of 15 Members of the Board of Directors.
9. Election of External Auditors and fixing their remuneration.
10. Directors' Bonus.
11. Other Matters.
12. Adjournment.

In accordance with Article XIII of the By-Laws, the Stock and Transfer Book of BPI will be closed from March 19 to April 19, 2001. Only Stockholders of record as of end of business hours on March 18, 2001 will be entitled to notice and to vote at the said meeting.

If it will be inconvenient for you to attend the meeting, you may at your option, appoint another person to represent you thereat by means of a proxy, which should be submitted to the Office of the Corporate Secretary of BPI, 19th Floor, BPI Building, Ayala Avenue corner Paseo de Roxas, Makati City, Metro Manila, not later than 5:00 P.M. of April 6, 2001. Validation of proxies shall be held at the same office on April 10, 2001 at 4:00 P.M.

When signing as attorney-in-fact, executor, administrator, guardian, or in any other representative capacity, please give full title and file papers showing your authority.

FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
(Sgd.) CARLOS B. AQUINO
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SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Opening Ceremonies	April 05	10:00 AM (By Invitation)
Trade Day	April 05	Exhibit area opens right after the Opening Ceremonies and ends at 6:00 PM
Trade Days	April 6-7	10:00 AM to 6:00 PM
Trade & Public Day	April 08	10:00 AM to 6:00 PM

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‘Virtual abolition’ of death penalty hit

By **Christine Avendaño**
Jerome Aning
and **Armand N. Nocum**

AMID the growing controversy over President Macapagal-Arroyo's stated policy of commuting death sentences which anti-crime crusaders have denounced as a virtual abolition of the death penalty, two senators urged the President to repeal or amend the Death Penalty Law.

But Malacañang yesterday denied instituting a wholesale commutation of death sentences amid warnings that the President may be courting charges of "abuse of constitutional powers."

Senate President Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said the President's refusal to uphold the death sentence of convicted felons "clearly means that she is against capital punishment."

She should move for the repeal of the Death Penalty Law as she "risks being accused of not enforcing the law or going against a national policy if she keeps on commuting death sentences," Pimentel warned.

He urged Ms Macapagal to certify the bill that he authored seeking to repeal the seven-year-old law that re-imposed the death penalty for heinous crimes through lethal injection.

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon urged the President to move for the amendment of the law in the new Congress as she was in effect amending the provisions of the Death Penalty Law by her actions.

"If she has been correctly quoted as having invoked a blanket authority to suspend all death sentences under her administration, she may be guilty of usurpation of the legislative power of Congress," Biazon told reporters.

Under the Constitution, the President is authorized to commute death sentences upon review of the cases.

In a radio interview yesterday, presidential spokesperson Renato Corona denied that the President's policy has the effect of abolishing the Death Penalty Law as the commutations were done on a case-to-case basis.

He denied that there was a "blanket" commutation of the sentences of as many as 1,000 Death Row convicts.

Corona also said there was no truth to the charge that Church pressure was behind the President's decision to indirectly suspend the implementation of the death penalty.

"There are other sectors against the death penalty. It is wrong to say that the President only listens to the advice of the Catholic Church," he said in a radio interview.

Former Justice Secretary Serafin Cuevas, in a radio interview, said what the President was doing now "may constitute an abuse of constitutional power."

PNP revamped in 32 key positions

By **D. Veridiano**

A MASSIVE reshuffle was effected yesterday in the Philippine National Police hierarchy affecting 32 key positions in the different levels of command.

Director General Leandro Mendoza, PNP chief, announced the reshuffle, saying the changes at the top of the directorial staff, national support units, regional, district and provincial offices was part of the routine reorganization of the police force.

Named to new posts were Chief Supt. Dominador Resos Jr., as regional director for the Cagayan Valley; Chief Supt. Robert Delfin, regional director for Bicol; Chief Supt. Rolando Garcia, regional director for Western Visayas; Chief Supt. Simeon Dizon, regional director for Western Mindanao; Chief Supt. Virtus Gil, regional director for the Cordilleras;

Chief Supt. Rodolfo Caisip, regional director for the Caraga region; Chief Supt. Romulo Sales, deputy regional director for administration of the National Capital Region Police Office; Chief Supt. George Alino, district director, Eastern Police District; Chief Supt. Victor Luga, deputy director for plans; Chief Supt. Crescencio Maralit, deputy director for police community relations;

Chief Supt. Jose Marlowe Pedregosa, director, crime laboratory; Chief Supt. Rowland Albano, deputy regional director for operations, NCRPO; Senior Supt. Arturo Lomibao, regional director for Ilocos-Pangasinan region; Senior Supt. Nardito Yoro, regional director for Eastern Visayas; Senior Supt. Eduardo Matillano, regional director for Southern Mindanao.

With Alcuin Papa

Comelec gag order sought

By **G. Lacuarta**

A COMELEC commissioner yesterday sought to gag his fellow officials to stop the infighting within the poll body that is threatening to derail preparations for the May 14 elections.

Commissioner Mehol Sadain, chair of the Comelec media committee, recommended to his fellow commissioners that only "decided or settled matters" be released to the media, after a report on the theft of ballots was leaked recently to the press.

As a result of the revelation by Commissioner Rex Borra, who insinuated that the culprit worked for Commissioner Luzviminda Tancangco, a word war erupted within the poll body between the factions identified with President Macapagal-Arroyo and deposed President Joseph Estrada.

"All officials of the Comelec should refrain from issuing press statements that tend to sow intrigue, or maliciously or unfairly impute a wrongdoing on any Comelec official without the benefit of an investigation or clearance from the commission en banc or the chairman," Sadain said in a memorandum. Sadain said matters being deliberated by the Comelec en banc should be appropriately labeled as such if members of the media ask.

Comelec sources said the collegial poll body has been polarized between the group of chair Alfredo Benipayo and that of Tancangco, a protégé of Estrada's brother-in-law, Dr. Raul de Guzman of the University of the Philippines.

On Benipayo's side are Commissioners Florentino Tuason Jr., a former regional trial court judge, and Borra. The three were appointed by Ms Macapagal on Feb. 16.

Tancangco, meanwhile, is supported by Commissioners Rufino Javier, Ralph Lantion and Sadain. The four, all Estrada appointees, comprise a majority in the Comelec leadership.

Benipayo yesterday denied his recent order designating Tuason and Borra as his representatives in two committees chaired by Tancangco and Lantion with full authority over the operations of the committees has contributed to the infighting.

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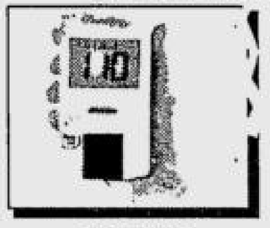
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REMINDER

To the devotees of the SACRED HEART OF JESUS.

Tomorrow, April 6, will be the FIRST FRIDAY of the month.

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CONSUMER & OIL PRICE WATCH

-Private Sector-

SO THE PUBLIC MAY KNOW

NO PRICE INCREASE IN APRIL

There will be no price increase in April and should the peso stabilize at P48.75, we can expect a reduction of 20 to 26 centavos per liter on the third week of April.

The actual oil price reduction due in April should be forty centavos per liter. After deducting the March oil price increase of 14 centavos, we still have a reserve balance of 26 centavos from the oil companies.

The price of oil is softening instead of strengthening as a result of the OPEC decision in mid-March to cut production by one million barrels per day. In fact, the price of Dubai crude dropped by US$1 to a record low of $22.82, which is below the OPEC benchmark of $24.50 to $25.00 per barrel.

The softening of oil prices is attributed to the slowdown of the world economy led by the United States and Japan, which represent 40% of world trade. Both countries are headed towards deflation in the second quarter.

ACTUAL OIL PRICE REDUCTION DUE IN APRIL	P0.40*
Deduct:	
Oil price increase due oil companies in March	(.14)
BALANCE DUE FROM OIL COMPANIES	P0.26 centavos

*The average price of Dubai crude decreased by $1.35 in March as compared to February ($23.45 vs $24.80) and the peso depreciated by 28 centavos (March P48.52 vs P48.24 in February)

PRICES OF PRIME COMMODITIES

Compared to December, the survey undertaken by the Consumer and Oil Price Watch for the week ending March 29 reveals the following:

a) Substantial increase in Powdered Milk from P27.30 to P29.70; Evap Milk from P18.85 to P19.90; Pork Liempo from P114.05 to P122.80; Refined Sugar from P25.80 to P26.75; Brown Sugar from P20.70 to P22.40.

b) Substantial decrease in Cooking Oil Lapad from P9.50 to P8.65; Long Neck from P19.15 to P16.35; Dressed Chicken from P90.00 to P86.80; Detergent Bar (Ajax) from P16.75 to P15.25.

c) Minimal increase in Ordinary Rice (35%) broken from P19.15 to P19.50; Coffee Refill from P21.40 to P21.95; Sardines from P8.20 to P8.25.

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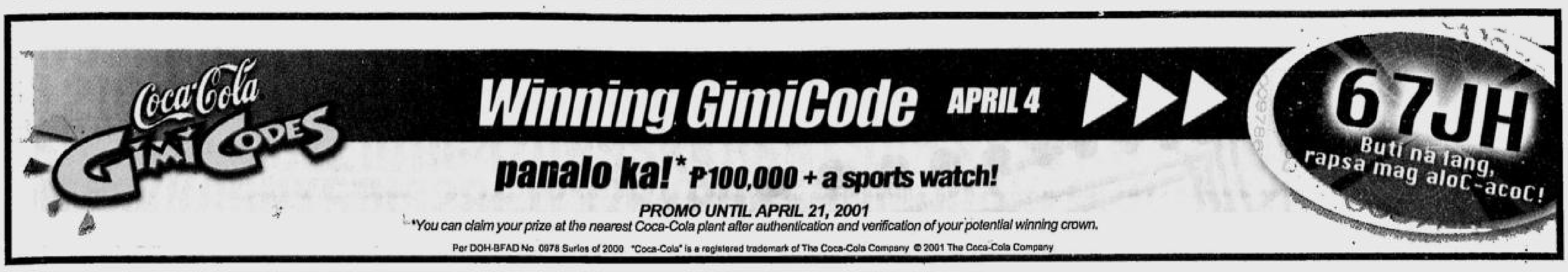
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- **Heherson T. Alvarez** fought the Dictatorship with unbending courage.
- He initiated the impeachment against former President Joseph Ejercito Estrada.
- He has labored with vision in crafting laws that protect the environment, conserve and enhance our natural resources and national economy.
- He is a nationalist leader, a man of tried and tested principles and commitment.
- Madame President we support your choice of **Secretary Heherson T. Alvarez** and pledge to support your crusade of good governance.

From the Friends of Heherson T. Alvarez

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CUDAP-MANA Multisectoral Federation
Reynaldo Santos, Federation Chairman, NCR

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Victims of Mindanao War
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and Corruption
Datu Tommy Dawang - President

Sultan Kudarat Indigenous Peoples
Tribal Ass'n.
Sultan Rey Daklas - President

TRICAP

No quarrel in Palace–Dacer daughter

(From page A1)

he had nothing to do with the alleged abduction and murders of Dacer and his driver, Manuel Corbito, in November.

He said he felt as though he had been sentenced to "lethal injection without due process."

The National Bureau of Investigation yesterday ordered Viña to appear before the agency on Friday to clear his name.

And for his own safety, Viña should be prepared not to leave the NBI premises once he shows up, said NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco.

In a phone interview on Tuesday, Viña belied reports that he had gone into hiding and that he had plans to leave the country to evade the charges.

Viña appealed to his superiors to give him and other accused PAOCTF agents a chance to file leaves of absence in order to prepare their defense.

He claimed that he and the other policemen were being tried by publicity.

"*Huwag naman sana idaan sa publicity. Bigyan sana kami ng chance at maging professional ang approach nila. Kung may probable cause, i-file kaagad ang kaso* so we can answer it in a proper forum," he told the INQUIRER.

Abandoned

He said that he would answer the allegations immediately following the filing of a formal complaint against him. So far, he added, the NBI has not filed any charges against him.

He also said he felt abandoned by his superiors in the Philippine National Police. "I felt that we were being abandoned by the (headquarters) of the PNP. I hope the PNP officials will give us a chance to file a leave (of absence) so we can squarely face this problem," he said in Filipino.

"I don't see even a little bit of an effort to defend us on the part of higher-ups in the PNP. They haven't given us any lawyers. They don't want to give us any assistance. And they're crushing us in the media when there isn't even a formal case yet," he added.

Viña also denied that he was a close aide of senatorial candidate Panfilo Lacson, the former PNP chief, saying that he was just his "subordinate."

Losing face

Cavite residents Alex Diloy and Jimmy Lopez had identified the PAOCTF agents who had allegedly played a role in the victims' deaths as SPO4 Marino Soberano, SPO3 Mauro Torres, SPO2 Jose Escalante and SPO1 Crisistomo Purification.

Lopez and Diloy claimed that Viña had been in contact with the alleged abductors by cell phone, and had given the final order to kill Dacer and Corbito.

But Viña said the allegations were "hearsay." He urged NBI agents to trace the calls made by the PAOCTF agents on their cell phones to disprove the claims.

He also said that even if he would be exonerated, he might still leave the PNP because he had lost face. "*Wala na akong mukhang ihaharap sa mga tao para magperform ng duties sa PNP,*" he said.

He added that it would be difficult for him to continue being a policeman because the allegations would hound him forever.

For his own good

Wycoco told a press conference yesterday that he expected Viña's full cooperation. "I have already subpoenaed Viña. I expect to see him this Friday," he said.

"I think it will be for his own good if he stays at the NBI. If (not), he might be killed by those people who ordered the abduction and killing of Dacer and his driver," NBI National Capital Region chief Samuel Ong said.

Ong said his men were willing to provide protection for Viña and other PAOCTF agents implicated in the Dacer case.

One civilian suspect, Digo de Pedro, was reportedly abducted by unidentified armed men on Sunday.

Wycoco reminded Viña that should he fail to appear, the agency would be forced to indict him before the Department of Justice.

"Flight and hiding is always an indication of guilt. If he fails to appear on Friday, then he automatically waives his right to answer the allegations," Wycoco added.

A signature appearing to be Viña's signature appears on a mission order issued to suspect Jimmy Lopez, a civilian agent of the PAOCTF.

The mission order, which identified Lopez as an SPO2, authorized him to carry a .45 cal. pistol.

The gun was recovered from Lopez when he and Diloy were nabbed by about 40 NBI agents during a pre-dawn operation on Wednesday last week.

Along with 10 others, the two were charged on Thursday with double murder charges before the DOJ.

'Liars'

Following Karina's remarks on the Malacañang meeting, the opposition Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino Party branded former President Fidel Ramos and his supporters "power-hungry, congenital liars."

Ramos "most likely got word that Dacer had reconciled with Estrada and would help him in his media campaign," the LDP said in a statement.

"It is now evident that Ramos' insistence on linking Estrada and LDP-Puwersa ng Masa candidate Panfilo "Ping" Lacson to the case is politically motivated and meant to cover his tracks as the real brains behind the PR man's abduction," the party said.

Option

In a talk with media men in Cebu on Monday, Estrada denied that he and Dacer fought during their last meeting.

The justice department is not ruling out the possibility of issuing Estrada a subpoena if he refuses to cooperate in efforts to solve the alleged murder case.

But Justice Secretary Hernando Perez told radio station dzBB that issuing a subpoena was an option justice officials would first "study" carefully in the event that Estrada chooses not to give a statement about the disappearance of his "close friend."

"We will also investigate why he refuses to cooperate—if that is the case," Perez said.

In another interview with radio station dzMM, Perez clarified: "In deference to his former position as president, we do not want to issue a subpoena at the moment." *With reports from Cathy Yamsuan and Martin Marfil*

Mike craving for wife but Gloria busy

(From page A1)

other than of the heart—a fact that her husband also pointed out.

He noted that her busy birthday schedule today might take her away from him, but added that he understood her job.

His wish "on her natal day": to "be one with her, the whole day—and night—if possible."

"Yet Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo is now President of the Republic, and, more importantly, she is a woman for others, like St. Thomas Aquinas Moore (sic), who was a man for others as we Ateneo alumni are wont to say," Arroyo said, mixing up his saints (he apparently meant St. Thomas More of "A Man for All Seasons").

"Knowing (Gloria), she will follow her normal, busy schedule, birthday or no birthday," he said.

"Still, hope springs eternal. I pray that I will have the chance to hug her, hold her hand and kiss her happy birthday as we enjoy a candle-lit dinner," he said.

"Then, I will whisper the words, which spring from my heart, from my soul: 'I love you, Gloria.'"

During most functions, however, the two appear distant, and hardly even talk to each other, even when seated side by side.

Erap's resort?

Unfortunately for the First Spouse, Ms Macapagal's schedule today, starting with a traditional birthday thanksgiving Mass at the San Fernando Cathedral this morning, leaves little room for romance.

Ironically, there is a program waiting for her at the Fontana Resort in Clark Ecozone—the same resort where Yolanda Ricaforte, a defense witness in the impeachment case, held office for "Juetengate" whistle-blower Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis Singson.

According to Singson, Fontana is owned by ousted President Joseph Estrada.

Ms Macapagal's own birthday wish is rather more ambitious than her husband's.

"I wish that we will be able to win the battle against poverty within the decade," President Macapagal said in a press conference in Bacolod City Tuesday night, when asked what she wished for.

She said her administration would begin by ensuring transparency and institutionalizing a "level playing field" for the business sector.

PPC wish

Ms Macapagal, an economist, said that government would provide "safety nets" for industries affected by globalization while ensuring that safeguards for the environment were in place.

The agriculture sector must be assisted through the implementation of a modernization plan, the President said.

She also vowed to raise moral standards in government.

As for the 13 People Power Coalition senatorial candidates, their birthday wish for Ms Macapagal is a little more politically selfish than Mr. Arroyo's: that they sweep the May 14 elections.

"We would like to assure President Arroyo that we stand united in backing all social and economic reforms our government will implement in the future," said a statement issued by the 13.

They said they were optimistic that they could win the senatorial race in order to eventually "fulfill the administration's vision for the majority."

Another wish they have for her is that she achieves her goal of conquering poverty.

Mass

Around 9 a.m. today, the President is scheduled to attend the Mass with relatives, friends, local officials, Cabinet members and the 13 senatorial candidates.

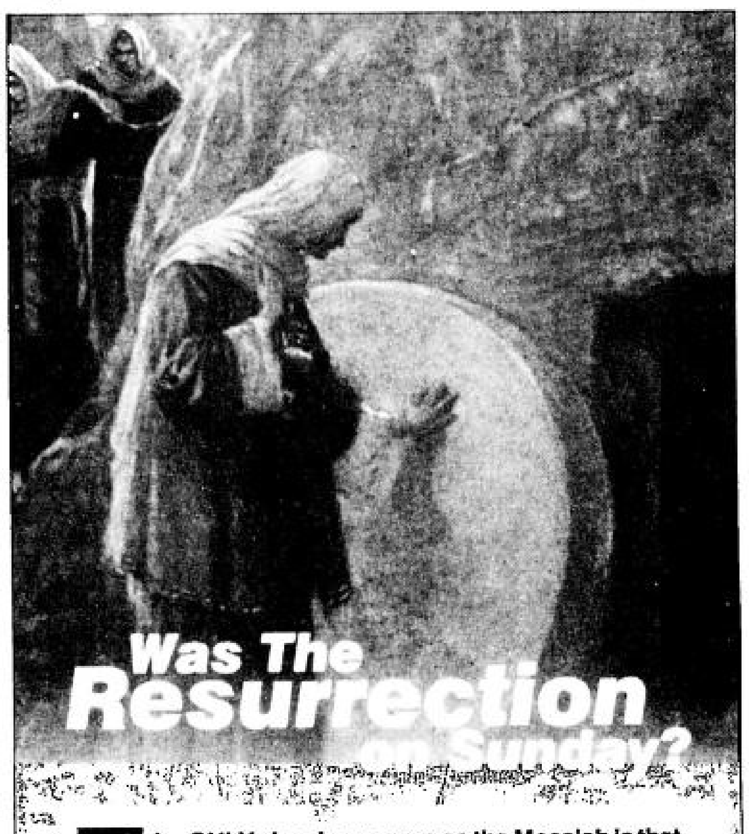
After a simple reception at the cathedral's patio, the President will go to the Pampanga provincial hospital to inaugurate its maternal and child care center.

She will also appear on the Dighay-Bayan program, a television show she hosted when she was still senator and Vice President.

The President is scheduled to have lunch with representatives from different sectors, then visit the Clark Airport City, where she is expected to unveil a marker.

Around 1:30 p.m., she is scheduled to attend a program at the Fontana resort, then proceed to Magalang, Pampanga, to speak at the commencement exercises of the Pampanga Agricultural College.

She is due back at Malacañang at 5 p.m., in time for the launching and inauguration of 30 pilot bridges under the President's Bridge Program, a project started by Estrada. *With a report from Christine Avendaño*



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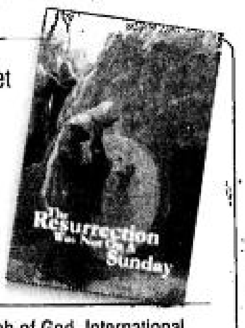

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Moment of truth

EDITORIALS

THE SUPREME Court's rejection of Joseph Estrada's motion for reconsideration on his twin suits—that he is the legal president and, therefore, that he is immune from charges—stresses what has been obvious from the very start: that there is no way to go but take the disgraced leader to court. This is the moment of truth that will test the political will of this administration that came to power on the wings of public outrage and boundless hope. It will, hopefully, show all and sundry that this country will be truly damned to have another Marcos-type creature in the body politic, proud and unrepentant, positively thriving, seemingly unreachable even by the long arm of the law.

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's spokesperson Renato Corona has expressed the hope that the Ombudsman would attend to the matter posthaste "because the people are waiting." Indeed, the Ombudsman has done the expected and filed plunder and other charges against Estrada before the Sandiganbayan. It is time now to wait for the anti-graft court to issue an arrest order for Estrada—the man who was voted to the presidency by more than 10 million Filipinos, as his supporters and lawyers like to point out, as though sheer number (actually, a mere plurality) had elevated him to the level of saints.

The activists have put forward a simple but, to the attentive observer, exceedingly correct formulation: The next logical step is to arrest Estrada. Crispin Beltran of the Kilusang Mayo Uno, noting the undue delay that has attended the process, said: "This should not drag into the elections."

The possible effect on the coming elections of Estrada's arrest and prosecution has been a matter of serious concern for his camp. Estrada himself, in an apparent bid to forestall the inevitable, has aired a grim warning of possible violence from his supporters should the law be allowed to take its course and he is clapped behind bars. As it is, the reactions of the senatorial candidates of the Estrada-backed Laban ng Demoktratikong Pilipino-Puwersa ng Masa have mainly delved into the possible repercussions of the ruling vis-à-vis their chances at the polls.

From reelectionist Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago, who has of late shown a startling contempt for voters no matter her wide grin and ready handshake, came this assessment that Estrada's arrest could produce a backlash of voters' sympathy for him and his candidates. But the statement of LDP-PNM spokesperson Demaree Raval is interesting for its stab at detachment: that the man who has been tirelessly on the stump for what could very well be his lifeline "can more than take care of himself," and that "the candidates have campaign schedules to meet." It looks like distancing will now be the name of the game.

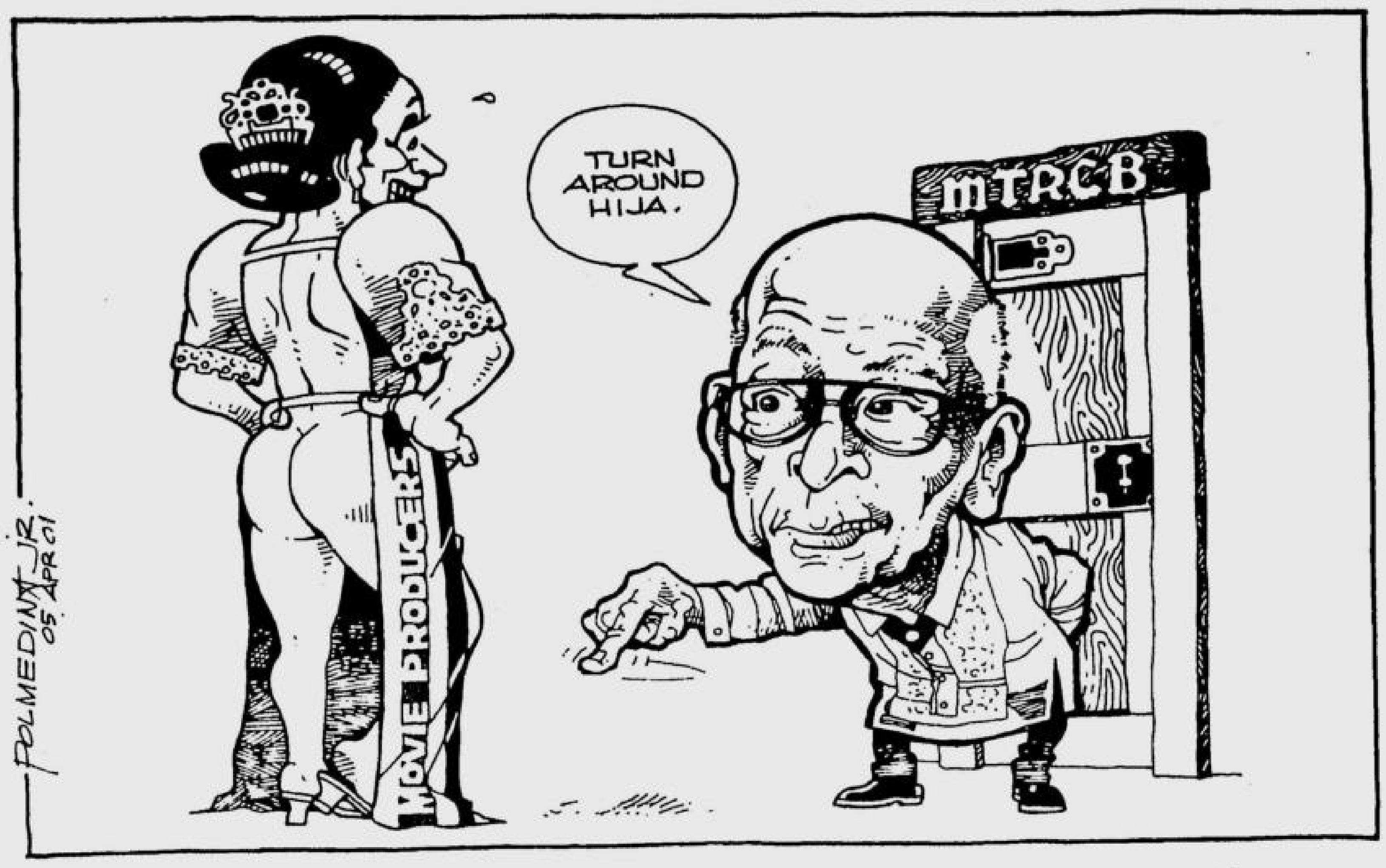
But the Macapagal administration appears to be also wary of the possible effect on the vote that Estrada's arrest and prosecution could produce, given that more than once it has displayed, if not indifference, then ambiguity, toward his case. The President herself has hardly been categorical in announcing how her administration would deal with thieves and plunderers. What can this be but an acknowledgement—and a taking advantage—of the sad fact that by and large, elections in this country still center on personalities and not on the issues that shape and govern our very lives?

Struggle for change

WITH JOSEPH Estrada's disgrace and ignominious exit from Malacañang, with the sordid details that managed to become public at his impeachment trial despite his allies' best efforts, you'd expect that his wife and son who are running for public office would be thanking their lucky stars that they do not officially carry the name for which he blazed a trail in the movies and became ultimately famous. But no. In campaign posters plastered on the length and breadth of the archipelago—excellent proof of deep pockets—Luisa Ejercito, also known as her husband's doormat, has chosen to add Estrada to her name. The same goes for JV Ejercito, the son of Estrada mistress Guia Gomez, in his own ubiquitous posters.

This is how it goes in this wild and wooly neck of the woods, where ruffians and rapists, clowns and cattle rustlers, even toilet-humor comedians, get elected into office.

The struggle for change is clearly uphill. Will the Macapagal administration show that, as T.S. Eliot put it, "there will be time/there will be time/to murder and create"?



Is there a 'demolition job' against Lacson?

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

THE LONGER the Bubby Dacer and other kidnapping cases are investigated and the more witnesses are presented, the more confusing they become. Last March 28, two farmers who allegedly witnessed the murder of Dacer and his driver Manuel Corbito, were arrested and presented to the media. According to them, Dacer and Corbito were abducted by four police officers of the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force (PAOCTF). On Tuesday, the suspect who supposedly strangled Corbito before the two were set on fire last Nov. 24, was himself abducted by unidentified armed men, according to the National Bureau of Investigation. Five other suspects in the Dacer case are also missing. Whether they are in hiding or were also abducted, nobody knows.

Some time ago, Col. Victor Corpus, chief of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (Isafp), presented another member of the PAOCTF, Senior Insp. Medel Poñe, who allegedly claimed to know about the involvement of other PAOCTF officials in kidnap-for-ransom cases and the murder of suspected drug lords. Last Monday, Poñe recanted his statements, claiming Corpus coerced him into making those statements. He filed charges before the Ombudsman against Corpus and Mary Ong, alias Rosebud and Matahari, who he alleged had tricked him into going to the Isafp headquarters.

For quite some time, Ong had been accusing PAOCTF officials of involvement in kidnapping cases. Poñe's statements were supposed to corroborate her own statements.

Recently, the Department of Justice talked about resurrecting the Kuratong Baleleng massacre—allegedly perpetrated by the PAOCTF which was already dismissed by a court.

All of these cases have one person in common: Panfilo Lacson, former chief of the PAOCTF. There are two other interesting facts to note: this is the height of the election campaign, and Lacson is one of the two most popular candidates in the opposition's senatorial ticket.

Lacson himself claims that these cases are "demolition jobs" against him to prevent him from winning in the elections. Truth to tell, judging from the way the administration is throwing everything, including the kitchen sink, at Lacson, the guy must be practically a winner. Why else would the administration spend so much time and resources against just one man when there are 12 other candidates in the opposition senatorial ticket?

The Lacson camp claims it has witnesses "to prove that there is an orchestrated conspiracy" by the administration to pin the Dacer case on Lacson and Erap. Curiously, two former presidents, Erap and Fidel V. Ramos, are exchanging accusations on the mastermind behind the Dacer abduction. Both now suddenly have leads on the case which had curiously evaded them while they were in office and had the means to do something about them.

While the administration is busy painting Lacson as a "black rogue," former kidnap-for-ransom victims rescued by Lacson and his PAOCTF men have come out to hail him as a "white knight" who rescued damsels in distress. In a press conference, the 15 former kidnap victims, including former Manila Times publisher Robina Gokongwei-Pe, daughter of taipan John Gokongwei, said that they had nothing but trust and admiration for Lacson, "who is the target of an administration-orchestrated smear campaign."

"If it were not for Ping, we would not be here today," said Gokongwei-Pe who was rescued by Lacson when he was still a lieutenant in the defunct Philippine Constabulary. "We came here on a personal note," she said. "We want to tell the people that we owe Ping our lives because he rescued us from our abductors."

All the victims said "Lacson was their savior and that he never asked them for a single centavo in return for their rescue."

How can one man inspire so much hate and admiration at the same time? Who are we going to believe, some officials of the administration or former kidnap victims Lacson had rescued? Which of the two groups have the motive to lie? Why are the Chinese-Filipinos, usual victims of kidnap-for-ransom gangs, so admiring of Lacson, while his former colleagues hate him so much? Is Lacson a hero or a heel?

What all this proves is that these cases are tough nuts to crack even for writers of detective story thrillers. And that we should not believe everything that investigators tell the media, which have no choice but to report developments in the cases. Remember that we are in the middle of a campaign and that Lacson is a most probable winner. The piece-meal revelations by the police and the NBI indeed have the appearance of a "demolition job."

As a Malaya editorial pointed out, NBI and police officials are "uncharacteristically loquacious" and "the coincidences are too pat."

"The arrests in Cavite came on the same day that two 'new' witnesses surfaced to revive charges that members of the defunct (PAOCTF headed by Lacson) killed 11 members of the Kuratong Baleleng gang in cold blood in 1995," it said.

"Weeks before, the wife of a missing Chinese businessman also came forward to accuse Lacson of kidnapping her husband for ransom. The wife also made the ridiculous claims that Lacson's trusted lieutenant, Sr. Supt. Michael Ray Aquino, one of the most bemedalled young officers in the Philippine National Police, was behind a shabu smuggling attempt.

"These are all telltale signs of a demolition job. Lacson is among the front-running senatorial candidates of the opposition.

"We would not be surprised if after the May 14 elections, all these accusations against Lacson would promptly die down.

"Win or lose, Lacson can take care of himself. The beneficiary of the demolition job would be the real perpetrators who would get away with the crime.

"What is worrisome is that media are being titillated into going along with this wrecking job."

Erap after the decision

WINDMILLS

Jerry Barican

TO ALL but the most wishful Erap loyalists, the Supreme Court's 13-0 decision (not to be confused with the same numbers involving the Senate race) came as no surprise. The political *fait* being *accompli* on Jan. 20, with a little help from the Court itself, it only remained to give the funeral oration. With some difficulty and not without contortions, that has now been finally done.

The Supreme Court, as has been well said, follows elections. Apparently, it follows revolutions, too. And the farther we are from January, the more settled the new order. Edsa II was a political, not a legal fight. And former President Estrada will have to fight in the political, not principally the legal, arena for him to survive.

From now on, developments will move quickly. The Ombudsman, as he has publicly declared, will move apace to file the case with the Sandiganbayan. The warrant of arrest will soon follow. And we head into territory we have never been to before in our history.

Despite the apparent setback for Estrada, this decision may actually have offered him political manuevering room. If we assume that the Supreme Court decision was inevitable, and that only its timing was in question, there is a good case to make that, ironically, an early decision like this one before elections was far better for the former president than one after.

Had the decision come down after the elections, it could have had no effect—presumably a sympathetic one for Estrada and his party—on its outcome. Moreover, he would have been barred from "appealing" the case from the Supreme Court to the people. Whatever its earlier physical and psychological discomforts to the former president, an arrest at this stage would probably be politically favorable to him and unfavorable for the administration and the People Power Coalition.

That, however, also depends upon how it is handled by either side. The worst thing Estrada can do is listen to any hotheads or adventurists in his camp who may wish to make a physical or illegal political challenge to the judgment.

Although this is farfetched, it is not totally inconceivable. Mindanao, by all reports and surveys, is heavily pro-Erap. Even more important, it is strongly anti-MILF and NPA. Seventy percent of our troops are based there and they appear to have the same misgivings that the civilians have over the new administration's approach to peace.

Some analysts even suspect the tough anti-Abu Sayyaf rhetoric of the administration to be a recognition of, and a surrender to, that reality. This is a formula, at the least, for an unhappy electoral outcome in Mindanao for the PPC and, at the worst, a fertile ground for mischief. The latter is an outcome that must be avoided at all costs.

A more rational approach by the Erap camp would consist in turning disadvantage into advantage. The survey figures on the President are sort of a summary of what's going on in the senatorial campaign. Rounded off, about 40 percent approve of the President's performance, 20 percent disapprove and another 40 percent are undecided. Both the administration and the opposition need to go beyond their core support and reach out to the undecided.

Consequently, each will demonize the other side. The opposition will portray a picture of vindictiveness, illegality and hypocrisy on the part of the administration. The administration will, essentially, do the same in describing the opposition. In what will be a mixture of PPC conviction and convenience, every crime and sin imaginable will be pinned on Erap and on some of his candidates. Whenever possible, the favor will be returned.

There may be an attempt to show "people power" in this case of one side or the other to protest or to support the arrest. But that is a sideshow. A refusal to surrender to a lawful arrest cannot long be sustained. A violent arrest will horrify most people. Both sides will realize that these tactics are not just futile but dangerous.

There is one realistic option available to the former president. He can peacefully submit while loudly protesting both his innocence, his perceived drumhead nature of the proceedings and the relative hypocrisy of the government in failing to pursue, with equal zeal and vigor, allies of the administration who he thinks face equally grave charges. In short, shout that he would be happy to share the cell with prominent members of the Ramos and Aquino administrations.

The effect would be campaigning from a cell, replete with both domestic and international media coverage any candidate would kill for. If it were legally possible, he might, observers think, even substitute for his wife (which can be done only if she filed as having a party, not as an independent).

If elected senator, he will have a powerful forum from which to challenge politically the assumptions of Edsa II. If he does well enough, he could even go back to his original demand for a snap election, one which may, in time, find resonance even with former supporters or allies of the administration. Who knows where this will lead?

But it is unlikely he will go so far, if only because of his personal conviction on the legitimacy of his presidency, whatever the courts have said. Nonetheless, these and other scenarios show the possible kinds of turbulence that may lie ahead of us. The Fat Lady may have not yet begun to sing.

Comelec infighting should stop

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

PEOPLE Power Coalition (PPC) senatorial candidate Wigberto Tañada of Quezon said it for most of us when he opined on the recent Supreme Court ruling reaffirming an earlier decision declaring Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo as the legitimate President: "So the die is cast. *Tapos na si Erap.* He is history."

Tañada said the ruling paves the way for the filing of the one dozen or so plunder cases against former President Estrada by the Ombudsman before the Sandiganbayan, and Supreme Court sources say it is only a matter of time before he is thrown into prison.

With a jail term staring the ex-president in the face, the opposition seems to be warning the administration against making moves against him by saying this would evoke sympathy for him and translate into more votes for the opposition. I submit that the administration should bite the bullet and prosecute Estrada. This will test, once and for all, the maturity of the people in the coming elections.

* * *

Ernesto Maceda is perhaps more correct: what will determine the election results will not be sympathy or antipathy for Erap, but "money and more money." Meaning, the candidate who runs out of money will lose. Maceda knows whereof he speaks as reports persist that he ensured the victory of some senatorial candidates in past elections by pouring huge amounts of money especially in Mindanao. If money is the determinant in the coming elections, then the opposition candidates have the decided edge. Except for two or three PPC candidates who are moneyed, the billionaires are on the other side. Note, for instance, how Loi Ejercito has been splurging on TV plugs for her candidacy.

* * *

If, as the detective movies always have it, one looks for aggravating circumstances in a criminal investigation, then ex-President Estrada's angry outburst against publicist Bubby Dacer in Malacañang less than 48 hours before the latter disappeared ought to be investigated. That Estrada had lambasted Dacer is now being denied by people close to him, including his loyal ally, Caloocan Rep. Luis Asistio. But Dacer's daughter Ampy, who was present at that Palace meeting, has confirmed that story. Moreover, a number of people who lunched with Dacer at his office the day after that meeting heard from his own lips how he had been berated by Estrada. One of them was Immigration Commissioner Andrea Domingo, and she ought to be summoned by the justice department.

* * *

Former Negros Oriental Rep. Miguel Romero, now running as the candidate of Lakas-LDP-Liberal Party for his old second district seat, recently wrote Comelec Chair Alfredo Benipayo to complain about the mysterious increase in the number of registered voters by about 10 percent, and particularly by about 18 percent in Bais City. Mike, who is running against the incumbent Emilio Macias of the NPC, has asked for an investigation inasmuch as from past experience the Comelec has estimated the usual increase in the province, with its 200,000 registered voters, at only around 6 to 7 percent. The Lakas mayoralty candidate, Hector Villanueva (a cousin of his namesake and former press secretary) filed a similar protest.

* * *

Commissioner Rufino Javier, who is in charge of Regions 7 and 8, has dispatched a team to look into their complaints. After its initial investigation, the team has already stumbled upon some 1,000 questionable registration entries.

Perhaps the Comelec chief was right after all in thumbing down a special registration for news voters. With all the complaints certain to be filed by various candidates clogging the Comelec, not to mention all the exclusion-inclusion proceedings in the municipal trial courts, the poll body would hardly have time to make crucial preparations for the elections.

Just as worrisome is the continued infighting among Comelec commissioners, which has never been this grievous before, as Negros Occidental Rep. Apolinario Lozada has deplored. Benipayo has put his two allies in two very crucial committees—printing and reception and verification—to oversee the work of Commissioner Luzviminda Tancangco and her allies, which, of course, the latter resented. This was done in the wake of Tancangco's attempt to "steal" ballot-printing plates from the printer, which alarmed Benipayo. With the Comelec infighting worsening by the day, can we expect orderly elections? Without the intramurals, the election preparations—which have been so shoddy in the past few months—are difficult enough.

Now more than ever, we citizens have to be vigilant against vote-buying and corruption among Comelec personnel.

* * *

I ran into former Ramos Cabinet member Raffy Alunan at the recent gathering for former President Ramos' birthday at the RCBC Plaza and asked him about the problems of Maynilad Water. He replied, "Desperate, urgent, help!" I looked at his position paper and it indeed looks desperate for Maynilad, but the ramifications for us consumers could be really bad.

Maynilad has been asking the Metroplitan Waterworks and Sewerage System Regulatory Board to act on the water firm's petition to grant it an automatic Currency Exchange Rate Adjustment (Cera), but Alunan complained that while the board has met weekly and held public consultations on this, "for which its members have received per diems," until now it has not acted on the petition. He stressed that Maynilad's service coverage in the West Zone has risen from 58 percent to 75 percent, with 85 percent of its customers now having water 24 hours daily. Over 41,000 households have benefited from the water firm's program for depressed communities, and Maynilad now brings clean and reliable water to some 4.5 million consumers at P6.85 per cubic meter, compared to the exorbitant rates of P150 to P300 per cubic meter being charged by water dealers.

* * *

But all this may come to a halt, argues Maynilad, if it is not able to meet its financial obligations, which, in turn is dependent on getting its Cera approved. Alunan explained that its debt service payments—inherited from the MWSS as part of a total $800 million owed by that firm but to be paid by Maynilad and Manila Water over the 25-year concession period—rose from P4.5 billion in 1997 to P6.7 billion in year 2000, resulting in a P2.2-billion concession fee loss. This was attributed to the devaluation of the peso, which reached P56 to a dollar at one point. The problem is that foreign lenders would not approve Maynilad's $350-million term loan for its expansion projects, which include servicing some half a million urban poor, as long as the Cera is not approved.

Maynilad has pointed out that other utility firms such as the PLDT, Globe, Meralco and electric cooperatives have long enjoyed an automatic Cera. What gives, indeed?

Field reports

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

REPORTS from the field: Rep. Patricia Sarenas, the incumbent Abanse! Pinay party-list representative who is A!P's first nominee in this year's polls, sent this account of her provincial sorties in the latter part of March, which was Women's Month. As her stories show, women all around the country are awakening, organizing and mustering forces not just for the elections, but for nation building as well.

Last March 16, Sarenas joined some 1,200 women from 21 barangays of Hagonoy, Davao del Sur, for their annual Women's Month celebration. In a speech before the women, Rep. Douglas Cagas endorsed Abanse! Pinay "very strongly," even vowing to make the women's party-list group number one in the first district of Davao del Sur. Sarenas' visit was facilitated by SB members Gina Basilio-Pocot and Teresita Cabarde, while Mayor Jose M. Superable Sr. was the gracious host.

On March 19, it was the turn of the women of Padada, also in Davao del Sur, to celebrate Women's Month. More than a thousand women from 18 barangays of Padada took part in the event, marked by the blessing of the Padada Women's Crisis Center, which was funded by Abanse! Pinay. "The center is truly beautiful," observes Sarenas, "*pulido ang pagkagawa*," meaning no shortcuts were made in construction. The project was supervised by the DSWD Regional Office headed by Director Ruel Lucentales, a former colleague of Sarenas' in PhilDHRRA, a development NGO. Among the women who organized the Padada visit were Inie Macasinag, the municipal social welfare and development officer, and SB members Mary Adlawan and Julie Carpintero. "I also met in Padada an old friend, former provincial board member and well-respected human rights lawyer Jo Almazan," writes Sarenas. A cancer survivor, Almazan has not allowed her ailment to get in the way of her goals and she is running again for the board. Also present at the celebration was incumbent SP member Esther Molina, another old friend of Sarenas'. Hosting the affair were Mayor Benjamin Saragena and his wife, Alfonsa, president of the Padada Federation of Women's Councils.

* * *

Sarenas then ventured to Dumaguete on March 23, for the convention of the Negros Oriental Provincial Commission on Women held at the Macias Sports Complex. Over 600 women from various municipalities of Negros Oriental were present, including barangay leaders and volunteer workers, as well as policewomen, including a woman chief of police.

The NCPC is headed by Glynda Desquatan, a friend of mine and Abanse! Pinay coordinator for Negros Oriental. She is also manager of SkyCable in Dumaguete. The organizers, Phoebe Tan and Marilou Co, the provincial administrator, also invited women candidates for local positions at the local and provincial level. About 25 women candidates attended, "and in their short two-minute speeches, they revealed an extraordinary enthusiasm and vim and vigor and freshness." Among the women candidates: Marian Villegas, Luisa Villegas, Mila Lomeda, Carmen Rivera and Lea Bromo. Sarenas made special mention of a young lawyer, Myresh Cadapan, who is running for Dumaguete city councilor. "She gave up a good-paying job in one of the leading law firms in Manila to go home to Dumaguete," says Sarenas with admiration. The Abanse! Pinay Negros Oriental chapter was formed "under the very able and inspiring leadership" of Norma Ybañez, a women's studies pioneer as well as a dedicated worker for the cause of women, who is now fighting a difficult battle with cancer. Desquatan and Welma Yap, another lady lawyer, have taken over from Ybañez, facilitating the funding for several projects, including the construction of a women's center, water systems and daycare centers. Before departing, Sarenas was hosted for dinner by Cristina "Tin-tin" Remollo, wife of Dumaguete City Mayor Felipe Remollo. The young Remollos are good friends of Abanse! Pinay chair Narz Lim.

* * *

ON MARCH 25, Sarenas was guest speaker at the Annual Cebu Province Council Assembly of the Girl Scouts of the Philippines held at the Cebu Plaza. This was upon the invitation of Rep. Clavel Martinez, who, apart from being the lone woman prosecutor in the impeachment trial, is also the Cebu Girl Scouts Council president.

There was a "veritable sea of green" at the Plaza ballroom, Sarenas reports, with about 400 GSP troop leaders gathered from all over Cebu.

In her talk, Sarenas recalled her early years as a Girl Scout, "the first women's group that I joined." It was in the Girl Scouts, she said, "where I think I first learned the values of nationalism, discipline, leadership/followership, service for others, love for nature, respect for the gifts of others, fair play, honesty, hard work and team work." Sarenas says the GSP national president, Ms Cynthia Zagala, was quite "pleased to note the work we have done in Congress," and endorsed Abanse! Pinay for the Girl Scouts' consideration. After meeting with the Girl Scouts, Sarenas also met with Abanse! Pinay volunteers who were then holding their voters' education training in the offices of Clear. (Center for Labor Education, Action and Research) Clear, headed by the dynamic organizer Pepe Gasapo, works with the female-dominated workforce in the economic zones of Mandaue and Lapu-lapu City, and is also spearheading the Abanse! Pinay campaign in these locales.

Still on Cebu, I would like to acknowledge the hospitality of my good friend Babes Sanchez and her husband Boy during my recent visit there, as well as the women of the Cebu Provincial Women's Commission. The Cebu chapter of Abanse! Pinay is very ably chaired by Alice Lim and Sister Mabe, all of them working very hard to make sure all three top nominees get seats in Congress, but especially Abanse! Pinay's second nominee, Alice Morada, who is based in Cebu.

Till the next field report..

Poster power

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

ON PAGE 2 of the INQUIRER two days ago was a five-square-inch paid announcement from one Jusi Vilarde of Samahan ng mga Empleyado ng Pinausukan Seafood House. Vilarde? Sounds familiar.

The "announcement," or rather, the reminder in Filipino, was directed to candidates. I had a good laugh while I was having my coffee because of the in-your-face manner that it was said. Still, one could sense the great restraint that Vilarde exercised in sending the gruff message across. *Nagpipigil ng gigil.* Despite the use of *po*'s and the third person plural, one could feel the scorn, the contempt, the irritation, the exasperation.

Those who placed that announcement should be happy that it's coming out free of charge the second time in this space. They deserve a buy-one-take-one. Here again is the reminder:

"*Sa mga kandidato: kayo ay mga ehemplo ng mga mamamayan. Matuto po sana kayong sumunod sa batas na ipinaguutos ng* Comelec Section 85 *Batas Pambansa Blg. 881. Huwag ninyong padumihin at babuyin ang ating kapaligiran. Iwasan ang pagdidikit ng inyong mga* posters *sa lugar na malilinis at magagandang tanawin.*

"*Sa inyong* ***pagdudumi*** *sa ating kapaligiran,* ***daan-daang milyong piso*** *na naman ang ating uubusin upang ito'y linisin at sa inyong* ***pagdudumi*** *sa ating kapaligirang ay para na rin ninyong* ***ninakawan*** *ang kaban ng ating bayan. Jusi Vilarde...*"

Someone should do a computation of the expenses that will go into the post-election clean-up. The rain in May and June will help remove the posters on the walls, but the same rain will carry the election debris into the narrow gutters and canals where they will soak and gather and cause the flood waters to rise.

A poster war is now raging all over. The happiest in this war are the printers and the ones hired to post the posters. The candidates are morose as they think of the expenses and of their opponents stripping the posters off the walls and replacing them with their own.

Posters are still the cheapest when compared with TV ads that cost six digits for a few seconds. The posters have a wall life of at least a week until they get detached or are layered over by other posters.

"Campaign Politics," the book by Ma. Lourdes N. Tiquia and Ma. Irene R.M. Cariaga that I wrote about two weeks ago, has a whole section on the poster war and Operation Dikit (OD). Visibility, they say, is the name of the game. Since there is a law that limits media exposure, posters are considered a very effective tool in introducing the candidate, or his/her face at least, to the voters. The bigger and more colorful they are, the better. And don't forget that the right pose, clothes, background, angle and smile of the candidate can do wonders. What about their stand on issues? *Wala.*

But as advertisers, media practitioners and graphic artists would know, it is not enough to have a face, a name and some catchy lines on a poster. Color, font type and size matter. Have you ever noticed yourself putting aside a reading material before you could finish reading it? Did you develop eye strain or a headache? Maybe it was the serif. Or the lay-out.

Campaign posters are not for people to gaze at, examine and brood over. These are not art pieces meant to enhance bare corners. Campaign posters are meant to scream and grab attention. Saturation is the key. The more the better—for the candidate, but not necessarily for us and the environment.

I noticed that some of the choicest places to post are the concrete islands in the middle of the road. They are slightly below eye level. If you're riding a car or a jeep, you would easily see them. The walls on the side of the road are good for distance viewing for bus riders.

There are techniques and strategies for an effective Operation Dikit. One could make an arithmetical time and motion study of this but the exercise would all be a waste if one does not start with the most important thing: the paste. And don't forget the recipe. The right ingredients and method can make all the difference.

Here is what the two veterans of election campaigns have to say. Using the ordinary paste powder (zoy) mixed with water is expensive and wasteful. The goo will not hold the posters for long. The best and cheapest is still the good old *gawgaw* (starch made from *kamoteng kahoy*) which is used for *almirol* for clothes. It is best cooked in vats heated by firewood and dried coconut palm. Cooking on a kitchen stove would be cumbersome and expensive.

One should come up with the right consistency—not too sticky, not too watery, not *maja blanca*. Smooth concrete walls require thin paste while rough, porous surfaces require thicker layers. For 1,000 medium-size posters, six kilos of *gawgaw* cooked into paste would be needed.

But covering empty surfaces is not enough. Campaign strategists should not do their "postering" all at once. Operation Dikit is done in waves. One should know the voting population in the target areas. As election day nears, the operation should be more sustained and intensified. Posting at night is the best. Saves you money for cold drinks.

In places where the Dikit Brigade is not likely to go back, more durable materials like cloth or sack material, instead of paper posters, are more economical because they can withstand time and the elements.

What, no walls? For rural areas where there are few standing surfaces to stick on, posters are of no use. Alas, the trees are the victims in these places. The trees are suddenly abloom with cardboard buntings and other small things that are difficult to remove afterwards. There should be a law against this practice. I've seen campaign streamers hanging on fish pens in the middle of the lake. The fish, crustaceans and water lilies are expected to vote.

Have the nerve of Vilarde. If you see posters and streamers in places where you think they shouldn't be, remove them. The faces that deface the environment will not get my vote.

Not registered

YOUNGBLOOD

Tina Pastelero

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

I AM not a registered voter. Presumably, I am one of a few million unregistered youths for whose right to vote in the May elections several parties have been fighting for.

Why didn't I register before the Dec. 27 deadline? There are two reasons. First, I knew I wouldn't be in the country on May 12 and so I would not be able to vote anyway. Second, when I did attempt to register, it was apparently too late.

Let me explain. My parents have been planning our vacation for the past few months, and since we planned to go abroad it made perfect sense to forget about registering for the time being since we wouldn't be around when the election came. But my mother told me that I should go ahead and register anyway, just in case our trip didn't push through. Besides, she added, it would save me the effort of registering in the future.

There was also the distance to consider. If I understand it correctly, the Commission on Elections sets up registration booths in different villages and subdivisions for the presidential elections every six years, but for the mid-year elections, would-be voters are required to register at the Comelec offices. It's pathetic of me to mention having to travel a bit farther as an excuse not to have registered, but school work was keeping me busy and I only found myself on my way to the Comelec office in Quezon City on the afternoon of Dec. 22.

The dozens of *barangays* in Quezon City are grouped into four districts, with a different office assigned to each. I opened the door to the office handling my district and was surprised to see a man spinning around and dancing in the middle of a big circle of people who were clapping their hands and egging him on. I hope they wouldn't make me do the same thing just to register, I thought. But it turned out that the employees were having their Christmas party that afternoon, and so they were unable to attend to me that day.

The following day was a Saturday. Since my family was going out of town on the 25th, I wouldn't be able to go back to that office until either the 26th or the 27th.

Now I could have gone into a defensive mode and started saying things like, "My one vote wouldn't count anyway." But I knew too well how far from the truth that was. So I put things in perspective and told myself that it was completely my fault that I wasn't able to register. True enough, my situation was slightly different from that of some four million other youths who couldn't register, but I shouldn't blame anyone else for my own negligence.

Last January, there was People Power II, which several people likened to a huge street party on Edsa ("*Ang saya!*" they keep saying). The youths came in full force, and so many people argue, how can the youths be accused of being too apathetic to vote if they helped oust Erap from office?

This is where I begin to wonder if motivations matter and should be taken into consideration before one begins to praise the youths for their vigilance and social conscience. I know most of the youths went to Edsa because they sincerely wanted to bring down the Erap administration. But I also know that a good number were there simply because it was the place to be and to be seen. People will argue with me on this, but one cannot assume that because the youths were an integral part of Edsa Dos, they are completely without blame for having missed the registration deadline.

In my university, there was an information campaign urging students to register before the Dec. 27 deadline. Flyers outlining the registration procedure and reminding students to register were passed around. Posters were hung along the corridors to remind the students of their right as Filipino citizens to have their voices heard in the elections.

What's interesting is that a lot of this information flew over the heads of the students. Maybe not enough flyers were distributed, or not enough posters were hung—I can't really pinpoint the reason why many knew so little about it. But what I do know is that even after an honest effort to inform the students, many remained uninformed afterwards. When classes resumed in January, many students I spoke to were surprised when I told them that the registration deadline had already come and gone.

Should these students be blamed for not being in the know? I'm tempted to say yes, but I'm not entirely sure.

In all fairness, I can understand why a majority of the youth say that they didn't know about the registration deadline. I hadn't heard about it over the radio; neither did I ever read about it in the newspaper. Without the information campaign in my school, I would have been left totally clueless.

It seems as though both parties are at fault here. The Comelec didn't go to great lengths to make it known that the registration deadline was approaching. But then the youths also didn't make any effort to ask anyone about the registration deadline either.

My personal suggestion? Next time, the Comelec wants to announce anything to the youths, it should try text messaging which has been credited with bringing so many people to Edsa in a very short time. I hate the name, but we're not called "Generation Text" for nothing.

Tina Pastelero, 19, is a junior at the Ateneo de Manila University with a double major in BS Management Engineering and AB Communication.

Notice to Youngblood contributors

Contributors to Youngblood who haven't received their checks are requested to inquire with the PDI cashier on Friday.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO. . .?

Graft case against Plameras

ON APRIL 8, 1997, the province of Antique, represented by then Gov. Jovito Plameras (now the representative of Antique's lone district), entered into a deal with CKL Enterprises, represented by Jesusa dela Cruz, for the purchase of 1,356 school desks and 5,246 armchairs worth P5.6 million.

A week later, the province issued a P5.6-million check drawn against its account with the Land Bank of the Philippines' San Jose branch. The balance in the account was from the Department of Education Culture and Sports under the Poverty Alleviation Fund.

CKL was supposed to deliver the entire order upon receiving full payment. However, it was only able to deliver 60 desks and 3,468 chairs, all unassembled, only on mid-1997. In March 1998, Plameras demanded the delivery of the remaining desks and chairs but CKL failed to do so.

In January 1999, Gov. Exequiel Javier learned of the rotting desks and chairs when DECS division superintendent Arthur Juada made a report to him. On March 3, 2000, Javier filed a criminal complaint against Plameras with the Office of the Ombudsman (Visayas).

In his reply dated May 29, Plameras said that when he resigned as governor in March 1998 to run for Congress, he had been cleared of all accountabilities by all agencies, including the Commission on Audit.

Nevertheless, in August 2000, Ombudsman Aniano Desierto approved the filing of a graft case before the Sandiganbayan against Plameras. The case went to the Third Division, which ordered Plameras' arrest on Aug. 14.

On the same day, Plameras filed a motion for reinvestigation with the Ombudsman. The next day, he surrendered to the sheriff of the Sandiganbayan and paid a P30,000 cash bond. He also asked the graft court for a reinvestigation and suspension of its proceedings. He argued that the Ombudsman did not wait for his "rejoinder-affidavit" to the complainant's "reply-affidavit." He added that the Ombudsman immediately filed the information against him, denying him due process.

On Aug. 23, 2000, the Sandiganbayan ruled that Plameras was deprived of his right to file a motion for reconsideration by the Ombudsman. Plameras was told to file the motion with the Office of the Special Prosecutor.

Case status: The Office of the Ombudsman has yet to resolve Plameras' motion for reinvestigation. ***Armin P. Adina, PDI Research Department***

Nuisance

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

YOU wonder sometimes if elections are not a natural invitation to cynicism.

Early in the campaign period, the Commission on Elections weeded out the "nuisance candidates," who as usual numbered by the scores. One of the criteria for considering candidates a nuisance was that they had no chance at all of winning in the elections. This was so because they were virtual unknowns and had no means to finance their campaigns. They were not members of parties and had no money to run posters or ads in media. They probably did not even have money to buy meals for themselves, much less treat their prospective lieutenants to one.

That fact made me wonder how much it cost to run a campaign. I asked around, and got a variety of answers. For Metro Manila, it took anywhere from P50 million to P100 million to run for congressman. Quezon City, which had the biggest constituency, was particularly expensive. But not much less was Manila, the country's premier city, where quite incidentally Mark Jimenez, who is reputed to be planning to unload a fortune, is running for a seat in Congress.

It cost less outside Metro Manila, other than in places where the posts of governor and mayor were being bitterly contested by rival factions that had money and power—and stood to lose them if the other side won. Those required vast investments in guns, goons and gold.

It cost more to run for senator than for any local position.

Of course, the candidates themselves do not get to shoulder these costs, or at least not all of them. They get help from their own parties, from friends and supporters and from "friendly" contributors. But that raises the $64 question (and even the $64 question has now become the million-dollar question, as programs like "Greed" show): How will they—and their backers—recover these expenses?

Can you really blame the masses for taking a cynical attitude toward candidates, whether they belong to the People Power Coalition or the opposition? You look at it from their point of view and you will see that the people they have before them are either the most altruistic and self-sacrificing prospective leaders on the face of the earth or the most venal and calculating ones. The people before them are either rich benefactors who will spare no expense just to serve them or big-time hustlers who won't miss a trick just to fleece them.

I've always wondered in fact why the people who get to be booted out as "nuisance candidates" do not challenge it in court as some form of discrimination. Or since they probably do not have the money to get such a petition notarized, much less hire a lawyer, why do they not get some lawyers' groups to do this for them? Most legal groups will probably also find this a nuisance, but I don't know why it should be so. Absurdity has been known to dramatize a point.

Why should people who do not have a fortune to run for public office naturally be excluded from public office? Or have a crack at it, however *suntok sa buwan*? Who is more likely to steal, the candidate who spent a fortune in elections or the one who did not?

There's more. I saw a TV report of the senatorial "nuisance candidates" a few weeks ago, and I understood that they included a house painter, a jobless man, a musician, a small-time businessman and the usual sprinkling of cultist figures. The house painter and jobless man thought they were just as good as the other candidates for senator. I myself thought being jobless was a very good preparation for being senator; Ramon Revilla, after all, became one. The musician believed in spreading music as a tool for peace and reconciliation and improving the people's quality of life. The businessman, who was from Mindanao, believed it was his mission in life to unite Christians and Muslims.

All this may seem ludicrous from our "normal" perspective. But for all their seeming absurdity, or even grotesqueness, I don't know that they are not telling us something vital about ourselves. Look at the concerns of the "nuisance candidates" again and see if they are not the concerns of most Filipinos in this country: finding a job, spreading comfort or cheer, finding peace amid war, ending religious strife. The "nuisance candidates" in fact are a trick mirror showing in distorted form the truth about our national condition. Their "causes" are a trick mirror showing in distorted form the truth about our national aspirations.

Even the cultists, who claim to be representatives of God or Rizal or both (I remember a presidential candidate named Ugboc during the 1998 elections who proposed to build a God-mandated government: he was deemed a nuisance in every respect) do carry some method in their madness. Or so if the scholars are to be believed. Rey Ileto wrote a whole book about it. The *masa* who joined Andres Bonifacio's revolution were not completely inspired by political beliefs, they were also inspired by religious or cultist ones, in particular by the ritual of the Pasyon. Like the Pasyon, they saw themselves going through death to see life.

From the other end, how many of the mainstream or serious candidates can claim to have concerns or causes or platforms that touch a raw nerve among ordinary folk? How many of the mainstream or serious candidates can claim to give shape or word to the hopes and dreams of people who live in the hovels of the city or in decrepit huts in sere fields? Certainly, it cannot help that the serious candidates themselves trot out movie stars and wiggle their hips on the stage in an attempt to amuse the peanut-crunching gallery.

Which is more grotesque or out of this world, the "nuisance candidates" invoking God's help to spread jobs, music and peace to the nation (sounds almost like Woodstock, except for the jobs) or the newly installed President of the Philippines, along with her retinue, invoking the power of the vote to justify gyrating on the stage? Who demand more to be outfitted with straitjackets, the slightly mad thinking they deserve to ascend to serious positions or the perfectly rational thinking they need to descend to humiliating routines? Who is the nuisance and who is the serious?

You wonder sometimes if elections are not a natural invitation to cynicism.

* * *

Comments are welcome at dequiros@vasia.com

An epidemic of violence

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

BRYAN Macagba Zuckor's obituary in a local newspaper had his picture and a brief anguished caption: "was killed for no reason...by a schoolmate wielding a gun in Santee, California on March 5, 2001." Bryan was 14. His mother is one of the Macagbas of La Union, a well-known family of physicians.

Only a few weeks earlier, another Filipino-American made headlines, this time as the predator. Police raided the home of Al Joseph de Guzman, a 19-year-old college freshman in San Jose, California, and found 30 pipe bombs, 20 Molotov cocktails, 4 rifles, a sawed-off shotgun and a cache of ammunition. They also found an audiotape where De Guzman apologized to his parents, friends and the mass media, in anticipation of his plan for a shoot-out and bombing of his college.

The case of the two Filipino-Americans and the surge of violent incidents (e.g., the latest PMA hazing death) here in the Philippines remind us that we need to look more closely into our own culture of violence.

In 1997,the United States had a homicide rate of 6.8 per 100,000, the highest among developed countries, exceeding even war-ravaged Northern Ireland's rate of 6 per 100,000. But if violence in the United States seems horrendous, note that our homicide rate in 1996 was 16.2 per 100,000, more than double that of the United States. Violence has reached epidemic proportions in our country, ranking, through the years, among the leading five causes of death in the country. In 1996 alone, homicides accounted for more than 11,000 deaths.

What factors contribute to our culture of violence? An instinctive reaction, which I also had, was to blame it on guns. But it turns out that guns were implicated, at least in 1996, in "only" about 20 percent of our homicides. It seems then that our violence involves more than guns. We stab, strangle, poison, bludgeon people to death, and sometimes for the most trite of reasons, even that "*masamang tingin* (a dirty look)."

A whole book could be written about our culture of violence but I wanted to emphasize the role played by tribalism and feudalism in amplifying this culture. Our primitive tribalism pits Filipinos against Filipinos based on loyalties to a fraternity, religion or ethnicity. We are trapped in an endless cycle of attacks and counterattacks to reclaim lost "honor."

Feudalism also contributes to violence with its emphasis on power derived from brute force. In a feudal system, a person can be violent simply because he is in power—the kind that "authorized" Rep. Jose Mari Gonzales to slap the House security chief last year. This feudal violence helps us to understand why hazing becomes so violent—the "masters" are intoxicated by their total control over the neophytes. These feudal relationships also perpetuate the violence year after year—today's neophytes become next year's masters, with a new batch of neophytes to victimize.

Our feudal relationships also contribute to violence because of the tremendous pent-up anger it creates on the part of the underdog. This is where the school shoot-outs in the United States offer us insights. After the guns have died down, classmates and teachers will remember the assailants were "quiet" but isolated, or sometimes even bullied.

De Guzman was described as a "choir boy." One can imagine him fitting our description of "*mabait,*" all the way up to his taped apology for his intended carnage. De Guzman was probably "typically" Filipino, a patient people known for two bloodless political revolutions. Yet these very same gentle souls can and do break out in homicidal rage, when honor is tarnished, when they are socially isolated, or when they can no longer take the bullying.

In the Philippine context, rage often accumulates because our feudal norms dictate that we defer, silently, to elders, employers and other "superiors," even if we believe they were wrong. Western psychiatrists of an earlier era used to describe what they thought was an innate tendency, among the "Malay race," Filipinos included, to run amok (the word is itself Malay). Today's social scientists see these rampages more as a consequence of a society's lack of mechanisms for conflict resolution.

It's not surprising that as "civil society" develops, the homicide rates drop. These societies develop ways for face to face conflict resolution, unlike tribal societies where the aim is to mobilize friends and relatives to get back at someone. A "civil society" also reduces violence by regulating power, so that no one is beyond the reach of the law and ethical norms. When people know justice will be meted out, they are less likely to take the law into their own hands, as we often see in the Philippines.

I've said guns figure only in 20 percent of our homicides but I worry about how these weapons may in fact delay the development of a civil society and a decrease in homicide rates. Pro-gun advocates say that the guns are there mainly for defense or for sport, but I would challenge them to prove that this is the way the majority of Filipinos perceive guns. Ask a young boy and he already sees guns as badges of masculinity, as tools to wield power and to get one's way. Whether it's the underdog security guard tired of being bossed around or the power-hungry politician, my fear is that having a gun on hand, rather than a bolo, makes it so much easier to lose control, to run amok.

What we need are rigorous studies, breaking down the homicide statistics and interviewing people to look for patterns in the violence, and the triggering factors. We may need to go beyond the homicides and look at other violent incidents, down to the domestic level of wife-battering for example, to understand the way our social structures and values converge to control, or abet, violence.

* * *

Comments to miguel@pinoykasi.org

LETTERS

Exploitation in sex-oriented movies

WE stand foursquare behind President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's decision not to lift the ban on the showing of "Live Show." We join all those who protest the exploitation of human beings, especially women, through sexually oriented movies that pretend to open our eyes to reality.

Defenders of the film "Live Show" claim it is not pornography but a "social realist film" that uncovers the poverty around us. In other words, their message is: Eliminate poverty and you will wipe out the *toro* industry.

How naive can they get? Marilou Diaz-Abaya, an acclaimed film director, said in a TV interview that a movie which dwells on poverty may actually be exploiting the poor. She cited an analogy: a pair of beautifully crafted shoes may actually be the output of child labor in an impoverished Asian country.

It is argued that those who are "titillated" by the sex in "Live Show" are "sick." Indeed, this is an excellent argument for banning the show. All it takes is for a few sick minds to cause havoç in society. The purveyors of child pornography are a sick but rich minority who thrive on the slogan "freedom of expression." Again we cite Abaya's statement that freedom of expression is not absolute but must go hand in hand with responsibility.

Other defenders of "Live Show" repeat the tired refrain that "there is no scientific evidence to prove that pornography leads to rape." Do they need scientific formulas and statistics? Of course, it does not follow that every man watching a pornographic movie will commit rape (in terms of sexual arousal and ability, all men are not created equal), but enough anecdotal evidence abounds. The book "Why Men Rape" (Levine and Koenig, 1983), a compilation of interviews with convicted rapists, tells of how they nurtured their rape-murder fantasies by indulging in lewd magazines and pornographic movies.—**EVELYN L. KILAYKO, chair, Concerned Women of the Philippines, 265-C Katipunan Road, Loyola Heights, QC**

The selection of a National Artist

IN HIS column last March 28, Neal H. Cruz expressed concern over the waning prestige of the National Artist Awards. Such claim is not without basis, considering that the selection process is fraught with shortcomings and the politicking that attends it can get vigorous. But for Cruz to make irresponsible and false statements on the circumstances surrounding the selection and, as a consequence, compromise the credibility of the jury is to exceed the limits of acceptable commentary.

Firstly, I could not have "sponsored" the nomination of novelist-illustrator Francisco Coching; he was automatically nominated because he was on the short list the last time the awards were considered. The insinuation of "sponsorship" is rather insidious, as it implies lawyering or lobbying that is contracted, hired and commissioned. I will never allow myself to be "commissioned" to support bids for the National Artist Awards. This ill-conceived accusation of corruption, therefore, must not go unchallenged.

I was asked by the Office of the Artistic Director of the Cultural Center of the Philippines in 1999 to prepare a presentation on behalf of Coching, who was nominated in the visual arts category along with J. Elizalde Navarro, to be delivered before the boards of the CCP and the National Commission for Culture and the Arts. I met one of Coching's daughters when I did some research for the purpose. Since then, I have been working on the possibility of staging a retrospective of Coching, as part of a broader academic advocacy to rethink the contributions of popular art in Philippine visual culture and to set a standard of scholarship in the field.

Secondly, the cavalier and contemptuous attitude Cruz has toward "cartoonists" and "illustrators" and their exemplary careers is very disturbing. Contemporary thinking on art has long discredited the traditional distinction between fine and popular art. To nominate Coching as National Artist is to revoke once and for all the debilitating distinction. Or, so we thought. We can just imagine then how hell would break loose if Coching were to be proclaimed in the future. Surely, in Cruz's estimation, "prestige, is actually just elitism" dressed up in the vestments of so-called art of high society.

Thirdly, Cruz misled his readers when he did not paint an accurate account of the process of this year's selection. For the first time in the history of the National Artist Awards, the NCCA convened the Council of Peers, an assembly of artists and critics tasked with reviewing all the nominations screened by the research committee. I am a member of this council, representing the visual arts sector. Last March 7, like the other sectors, we assessed the strengths of our nominees, all 14 of them, and after four ballotings, endorsed four names to the second deliberative body composed of three representatives from each sector. I was part of this group, together with Alice Guillermo and Emmanuel Torres, that defended our sector's choice of four for the final consideration of the boards and, hopefully, for the President's ministerial benediction: Ang Kiukok, Diosdado Lorenzo, Larry Alcala and Coching. This year saw a stricter process of selection, unlike in the past when the boards, prior to their discussion and voting, had only to listen to resource persons, or attorneys-on-the-take in Cruz's mischievous vocabulary. In the light of such scrupulous procedure duly supervised by the NCCA and being the youngest member of the panel, I wonder how I could have pressured my senior colleagues Alice Guillermo, Emmanuel Torres, Rod Paras-Perez, Corazon Alvina, Araceli Dans, Imelda Cajipe-Endaya, Bobi Valenzuela, Pandy Aviado and National Artist Napoleon Abueva into favoring my alleged sponsorship of Coching. I can assure the public that only conscientious ideas and principled positions were exchanged during the deliberations. To think otherwise is to harbor malice.

If I let this incident pass without protest, I would be doing a great disservice to myself and my family, the heirs of Francisco Coching, the university I represent, my peers at the council, this year's nominees for National Artist and the new National Artist for Painting, Ang Kiukok—all of whom deserve earnest apologies.—**PATRICK D. FLORES, associate professor and chair, Department of Art Studies, University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City**

Garbage crisis now under control

THIS is a reaction to Aida Sevilla-Mendoza's column last March 22. We recognize that the column expresses her personal views and opinions but feel that we must point out some inaccuracies in fact.

Contrary to her statement that Metropolitan Manila Development Authority Chair Benjamin S. Abalos has "failed to solve the garbage problem," the garbage problem in Metro Manila has already been properly addressed. It may not have been totally eradicated yet, but it has been stabilized.

Abalos, with the help of local government officials, the business sector and concerned citizens, has taken measures to arrest the worsening garbage problem in the metropolis. A study conducted by our Solid Waste Management Office found out that 67 percent of the 3,000 to 4,000 tons of garbage generated daily are already being properly processed.

We also are implementing long-term solutions aimed at permanently eradicating the problem of waste management.

We appreciate Mendoza's calling our attention to the traffic congestion in the Balintawak area and we assure her that we will see to it that the problem is solved immediately.—**BENJAMIN S. ABALOS, chair, Metropolitan Manila Development Authority, MMDA Bldg., Edsa corner Orense Street, Guadalupe, Makati City**

Will Miriam simply go into exile?

IT was a sign of Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago's intelligence that she knew no one would be crazy enough to shoot her in Luneta.

This is not to say that she is crazy. But will she dare go into exile for life, or stop praising her own intelligence, stop insulting and despising people who do not agree with her or stop practicing law if she is defeated in the coming elections?—**ISIDORO A. PANLASIGUI JR., 6 Big Horseshoe Drive, QC**

Compassionate neighbor

WHEN government services fail you, sometimes, private assistance will save the day. In our case, the help we needed most came from our neighbor, the Traders Hotel.

We are residents of the Maytubig Compound, a row of old but decent apartments along Maytubig Street, Pasay City, right at the back of Traders Hotel. For weeks, water from the street's drainage pipes flooded our residences. The water was murky and foul-smelling, and posed health hazards to the people, especially the children who lived in Maytubig.

First, we tried to remedy the situation ourselves by pumping the water back into the drainage pipes, a stopgap measure until the government fixes the problem. Then we wrote the city engineer's office in Pasay City to seek help. When it didn't come, we wrote again, and again after that.

We also wrote to the Manila mayor's office because the flooding started shortly after the repair of one-half of the street, which is under its jurisdiction.

After three weeks without getting a response, we wrote the manager of the Trader's Hotel to ask if they would be willing to help us. The day after they received our letter, we saw people from their engineering department fixing the street's pipelines. Today our problem has been solved.

In behalf of the 20 families living in the Maytubig compound, I write this letter in appreciation and also to serve as an admonition to the two mayors running for reelection. We will remember what they failed to do.—**MONIESA B. AMASCUAL, Maytubig Street, Pasay City**

Gordon is what DOT needs

ON FEB. 26 we, the undersigned members of the Friends of Intramuros Foundation, attended the flag ceremony at the Department of Tourism at the invitation of Secretary Richard Gordon. Those who were embarrassed when the secretary took to picking up cigarette butts and litter are those who, too often, would leave cleanliness to someone else rather than do the cleaning themselves.

We could understand Gordon's pique when the two sets of security guards were unable to properly raise the Filipino and department flags. They even acted as if they were unable to correct their own ineptitude. Then Gordon praised some staffers for work well done at a foreign exhibit, but they were not present.

We are happy with the energy and enthusiasm Gordon has brought to the job, and we fully support his priorities in getting people, both local and foreign, to appreciate the positive aspects of our country. We feel he is just what the DOT needs to get us into the mainstream of Southeast Asian tourism.—**ROBERT F. LANE, president, Friends of Intramuros Foundation, El Amanecer Bldg., 744 Calle Real del Palacio, Intramuros, Manila**

The WORLD

MARGOT J. BATERINA, Editor

Jiang demands US apology

HAIKOU, China—President Jiang Zemin demanded on Wednesday an American apology for a collision between a US Navy spy plane and a Chinese fighter jet. China didn't respond to President George W. Bush's urging to release the plane and its 24 crew members.

Washington "should bear all responsibilities for the collision incident," Jiang said, according to the official Xinhua News Agency. "The US side should apologize to the Chinese people."

Jiang, speaking before leaving on an official tour of Latin America, demanded that the United States "do something favorable to the smooth development of China-US relations, rather than make remarks that confuse right and wrong and are harmful to the relations," Xinhua said.

US diplomats were allowed to see the crew for the first time late Tuesday on Hainan island in the South China Sea, where they made an emergency landing after the collision Sunday. The diplomats said there was no indication when they could see the 21 men and three women again.

The diplomats were preparing for a long stay on the tropical island, a popular tourist destination. They visited local stores to buy the crew soap, laundry detergent, underwear and other supplies.

But they said there was no indication when they could deliver them.

"Nothing scheduled today," said Mark Canning, one of four American diplomats waiting on Hainan.

Jiang on Tuesday demanded that the United States end its surveillance flights off China's coast.

The US military says the EP-3E was flying in international airspace when it collided with one of two Chinese F-8 fighters sent up to track it.

A Pentagon spokesperson, Rear Adm. Craig Quigley, said in Washington that the United States was unlikely to stop such flights. They are meant to gather information on China's military by recording, radio, radar and other signals.

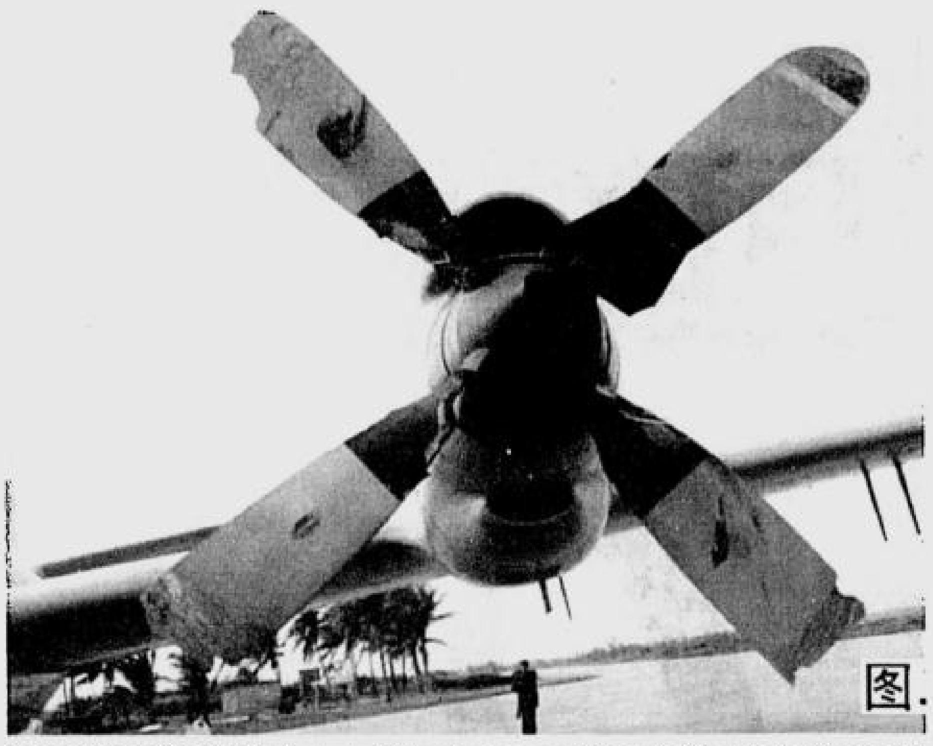
Bush warned Tuesday in Washington that ties with Beijing could suffer unless it quickly releases the EP-3E and its crew. China has been unsettled by the new Bush administration's cooler approach to relations, but had held out hope of productive ties.

"This accident has the potential of undermining our hopes for a fruitful and productive relationship between our two countries," Bush said. "To keep that from happening, our servicemen and women need to come home."

Bush said he wanted to give China time to respond in order to prevent the stalemate from escalating into a full-blown crisis. But the president said a grace period was quickly running out.

In Beijing, Ambassador Joseph Prueher said the United States is "looking forward to working with the Chinese government to secure their release."

Prueher has complained that China took so long to arrange a meeting. The ambassador is a retired US Navy admiral who once commanded American forces in the Pacific and had tried to cultivate ties with Chinese military officials. *AP*



THE DAMAGED US EP-3 electronic "spy" plane on Hainan in this photo released by China's Xinhua News Agency. REUTERS

Unpopular Japan PM on way out

TOKYO—Momentum gained within Japan's ruling party to replace unpopular Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori yesterday as the premier and the party's second-in-command prepared to discuss the date of an election to pick a successor.

Mori was to discuss when to hold the Liberal Democratic Party's presidential election and how many votes local party members will get during an afternoon meeting with LDP Secretary General Makoto Koga, a Koga spokesperson said on condition of anonymity.

The prime minister last month gave a strong hint he would step down soon by calling for the LDP's leadership election to be pushed up from September. Media reports say the ballot is likely to be held on April 22.

The LDP's party president is almost certain to be chosen by Parliament as the new prime minister because the LDP-led ruling coalition controls both houses of Parliament. Mori is currently LDP president.

Newspaper reports yesterday said that former prime minister Ryutaro Hashimoto had moved into the front-runner's position after major factions agreed to support his candidacy.

The Tokyo Shimbun said the flamboyant former leader has a virtual lock on the presidency because the three factions that support him have a majority within the party. Junichiro Koizumi, a former health minister who had been named as a possible successor to Mori, appeared to be losing support because he has provoked distrust within the party with his calls to privatize the postal service. *AP*

Thai premier opens his defense in corruption trial

BANGKOK—Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra's lawyers yesterday opened his defense in a landmark corruption trial, challenging the authority of an anti-corruption panel to indict him for financial wrongdoing.

Addressing the Constitutional Court, chief defense lawyer Suthee Damnuadee also accused the National Counter Corruption Commission of being politically motivated and of being hasty in ruling against Thaksin.

Thaksin, who did not attend the hearing, told reporters separately that he was unhappy with the NCCC.

"They are working hard to oust someone who earned his wealth honestly," said Thaksin, a telecom tycoon who entered politics in 1995. "Are they only able to oust honest politicians and tolerate corrupt politicians," he asked.

The NCCC indicted Thaksin in December for transferring millions of dollars worth of shares to proxies including his domestic servants to avoid declaring them, as required by law of Cabinet ministers. The alleged transfers were made when Thaksin served briefly under a previous government in 1997.

If the 15-judge Constitutional Court upholds the ruling, Thaksin would be barred from public office for five years, which could throw Thailand into political turmoil.

Cross examining NCCC secretary general Klanarong Chanthik, Suthee said the NCCC had no right to investigate Thaksin because it was set up only after the alleged offenses were committed.

Klanarong responded that the NCCC took over all the duties of its predecessor agency, which was seen as largely ineffective and politicized.

The NCCC was established as an independent commission under a reformist Constitution adopted in late 1997 to tackle rampant corruption in Thai politics. *AP*

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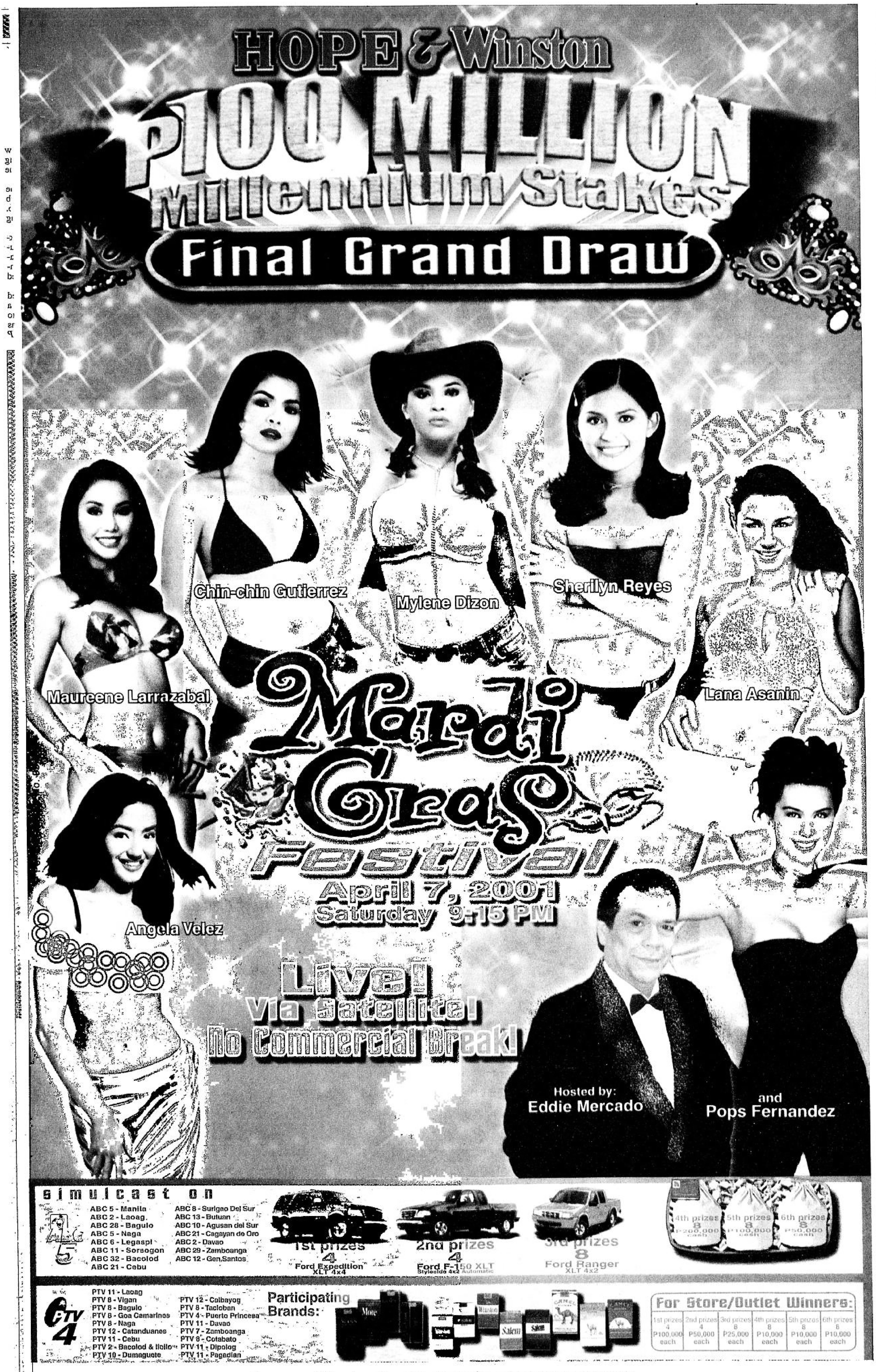

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Indonesia prepares for violence from Wahid allies

JAKARTA—Indonesia's defense minister yesterday said the government was preparing for violence as President Abdurrahman Wahid's supporters vowed to resist mounting calls for him to resign.

"We're anticipating possible disturbances by Gus Dur (Wahid) supporters. We're doing what we can to curb it," Defense Minister Mohammad Mahfud said.

"The president hopes that the willingness to prevent a conflict comes from all sides, including the parliament," the minister added, after a breakfast meeting with Wahid and top military and police brass.

His comments followed discussions of a possible Islamic holy war and the use of suicide squads by Wahid's supporters to ensure the president stayed in power.

About 500 of Wahid's supporters yesterday gathered in the town of Sukabumi, 110 km south of Jakarta, to discuss action against moves to oust the corruption-accused president.

The group—scholars from Indonesia's largest Islamic organization, the 40-million-member Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) once led by Wahid—were drawing up a strategy to counter parliament moves.

They discussed whether efforts to remove the president amounted to treason under Islamic law.

"We are looking at the efforts to topple the president through the perspective of Islamic sharia law," participant Achamd Subadar said.

The meeting lasted until Wednesday night.

Another participant, Hasan Mutawakkil, said the meeting would consider action to be taken against Wahid's opponents.

"We will decide whether the president and vice-president are legitimate according to Islamic jurisprudence, and then what action to be taken against those who intend to topple a legitimate government," he was quoted as saying by the Detikcom online news service. *AFP*

WORLDBRIEFS

Mideast tentative pact

GAZA CITY—Israel and the Palestinians tentatively agreed to resume limited contacts, with the United States as chaperone, after Israel fired dozens of rockets at Palestinian military bases in the Gaza Strip and a Palestinian mortar shell critically injured an Israeli infant. Israeli and Palestinian officials said they expected a three-way meeting to take place in the coming days, but that a time and place had not been set. The decision came after a week of steady escalation, including Israel's shelling of bases of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's security forces in the Gaza Strip late Tuesday. Seventy rockets were fired at five areas in Gaza, injuring 77 people, including policemen, said Tayeb Abdel Rahim, a senior aide to Arafat. *AP*

Koreans assail Japan book

SEOUL—South Korean officials met yesterday to discuss ways of protesting against a new Japanese history textbook that they believe whitewashes of Japan's colonial-era atrocities. Japan approved a new middle school history textbook Tuesday that some governments in Asia believe is a justification of its invasion of South Korea and other Asian nations in the early part of the 20th century. Senior Seoul government officials, presided over by vice foreign minister Choi Sung-hong, met yesterday to discuss their plan of action. The foreign ministry has said that options included recalling home the ambassador to Japan, Choi Sang-ryong. The textbook dispute has rekindled anti-Japanese sentiment in South Korea, which Japan ruled as a colony in 1910-45. *AP*

Polio eradication

NAIROBI, Kenya—A United Nations-led program has reduced the number of new polio infections by 99 percent since 1988, officials said Tuesday, but wiping out the disease will cost $1 billion and send health workers to some of the world's most dangerous places. The Global Polio Eradication Initiative has resulted in a drop in recorded polio cases to just 3,500 in 2000, compared with 350,000 cases recorded in 1988. The initiative sent health workers door to door—or sometimes from mud hut to mud hut—immunizing 550 million children under age 5 in 82 countries last year. "The key now is urgently accessing and vaccinating the children we haven't been able to reach because of war, isolation and lack of infrastructure," said Unicef executive director Carol Bellamy. *AP*

EU's FMD crisis mounts

BRUSSELS—Europe's foot-and-mouth epidemic showed no signs of abating yesterday as new infected sites were reported and the costs of containment and eradication skyrocketed. In worst-hit Britain, where the epidemic broke out in sheep Feb. 19, the number of reported outbreaks stood at 991 yesterday morning and was expected to top 1,000 shortly. The Netherlands reported three new outbreaks Tuesday, bringing its total to 15. France and Ireland are the only other EU countries with reported cases, with EU embargos in place on their exports of animals, meat and dairy products, although the EU's Standing Veterinary Committee (SVC) has partially lifted the ban on France. German farm officials were nervously awaiting final results of tests on that country's first suspected foot-and-mouth cases after 100 pigs were slaughtered as a precaution. The initial tests were negative, but final results could take days. EU Health and Consumer Protection Commissioner David Byrne told the European Parliament in Strasbourg on Tuesday that the cost to the EU of eradicating the epidemic could run to $155 million, with no end in sight. But that figure did not take into account the hundreds of millions of euros the British government was paying in market value compensation to stricken farmers for destroyed herds. *AFP*

US apologizes to Japan

TOKYO—The United States apologized to Japan after a nuclear submarine entered a southwestern Japanese port without informing authorities, and said garbled communications were to blame, officials said yesterday. James Foster, acting deputy chief of mission at the US Embassy in Tokyo, on Tuesday told the Foreign Ministry the Navy had mistakenly informed Japanese authorities the submarine would stay outside the bay, and called the blunder inexcusable, said a ministry official on condition of anonymity. The USS Chicago's unannounced stop at Sasebo, 982 km southwest of Tokyo, was the first violation of a 1964 bilateral accord that requires the US military to give 24-hour notice before a nuclear-powered sub docks in a Japanese port. The notice gives time for local authorities to check radioactivity levels in ports before and after US submarine visits. *AP*

Western gov'ts urging Yugoslavia to send Milosevic to UN tribunal

BELGRADE—Western governments are urging Yugoslavia to send Slobodan Milosevic to the UN war crimes tribunal even though the country's president says such a move is "not on my mind at all."

British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook is expected to press the case for Milosevic's extradition when he arrives in Belgrade on Wednesday.

Cook will be the first high-ranking foreign official to visit here since Milosevic was arrested last weekend on charges of corruption and abuse of power.

Milosevic's arrest has been hailed by the United States and its allies, which hope the move against the deposed Yugoslav president will lead to his extradition to the UN tribunal in The Hague, Netherlands.

However, Yugoslav leaders insist they want to try Milosevic first at home. Serbia's interior minister, Dusan Mihajlovic, said Tuesday that Milosevic might be charged with more serious criminal offenses, which carry the death penalty.

Despite Western pressure, Yugoslavia's new president, Vojislav Kostunica, ruled out sending Milosevic to The Hague anytime soon, saying the issue was not a priority for his government.

"The Hague court is not on my mind at all," Kostunica told reporters Tuesday. "We are not thinking about extradition now. We are dealing with Milosevic's responsibility before our own nation and before our own courts."

Many Serbs distrust the tribunal, claiming it is biased against them because it never indicted leaders of Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo for atrocities against Serbs during the Balkan wars of the last decade.

Yugoslav officials are hoping that with Milosevic behind bars, the pressure for his extradition to The Hague might ease somewhat in the months to come.

The United States, the principal country demanding Milosevic's extradition, agreed after the former president's arrest to release $50 million in aid.

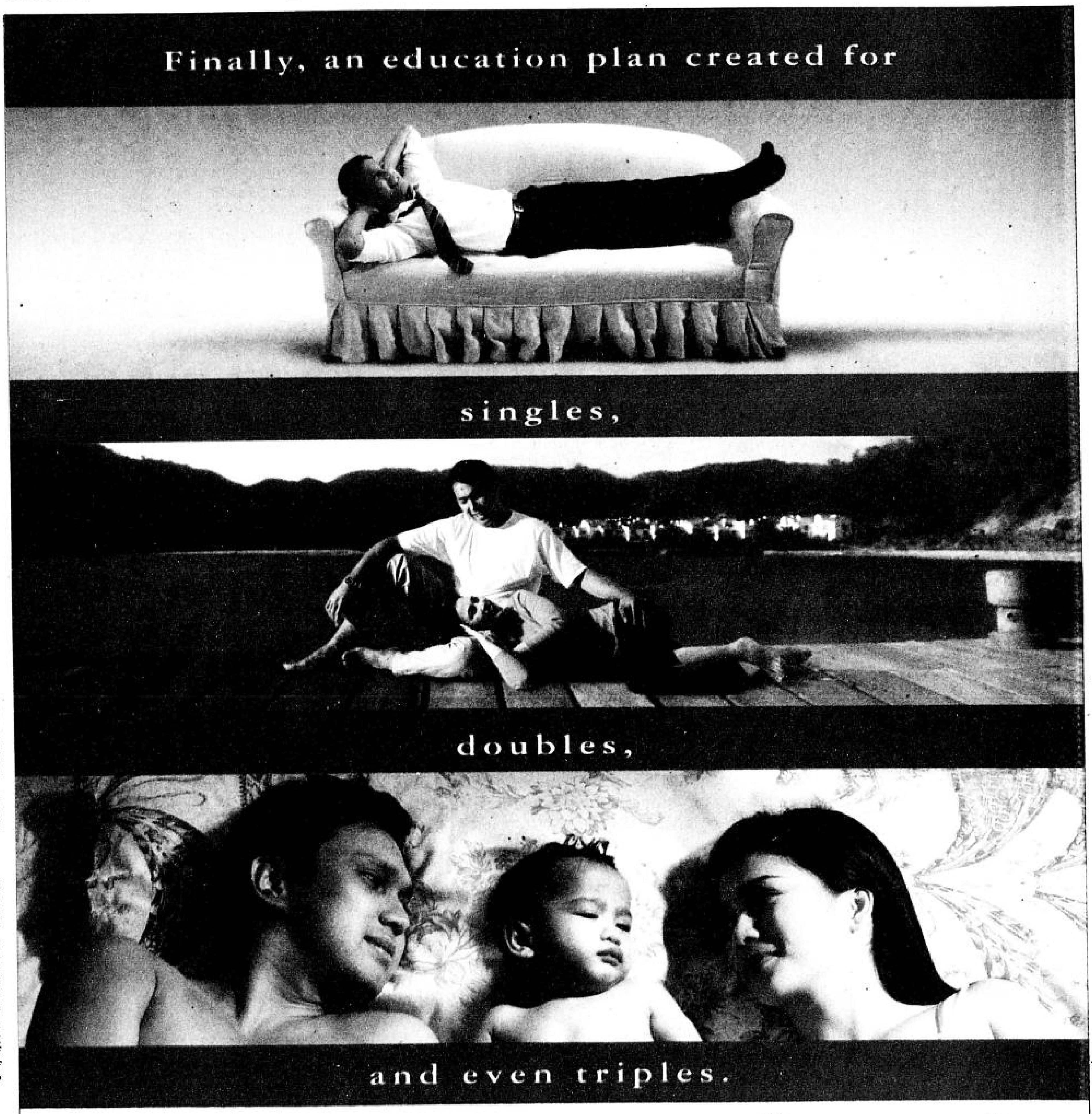
Washington had threatened to withhold the funds if Belgrade did not demonstrate cooperation with The Hague tribunal. The European Union security affairs chief, Javier Solana, said Tuesday in Athens that the 15-member EU has "full trust" in the Yugoslav authorities.

"We are not going to put any pressure on them to do anything because they know what they have to do and they are going to do it," Solana said, referring to the Yugoslav leadership

Milosevic was indicted by The Hague court for atrocities committed by Serb troops against ethnic Albanians in Kosovo. Those atrocities triggered Nato bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999.

Since Milosevic was arrested last weekend on financial charges, Yugoslav authorities have stepped up their investigations into other possible criminal complaints against the 59-year-old deposed leader.

Milosevic has steadfastly maintained his innocence and is expected to mount a vigorous defense when the case comes to trial. His appeal for immediate release was rejected on Tuesday. *AP*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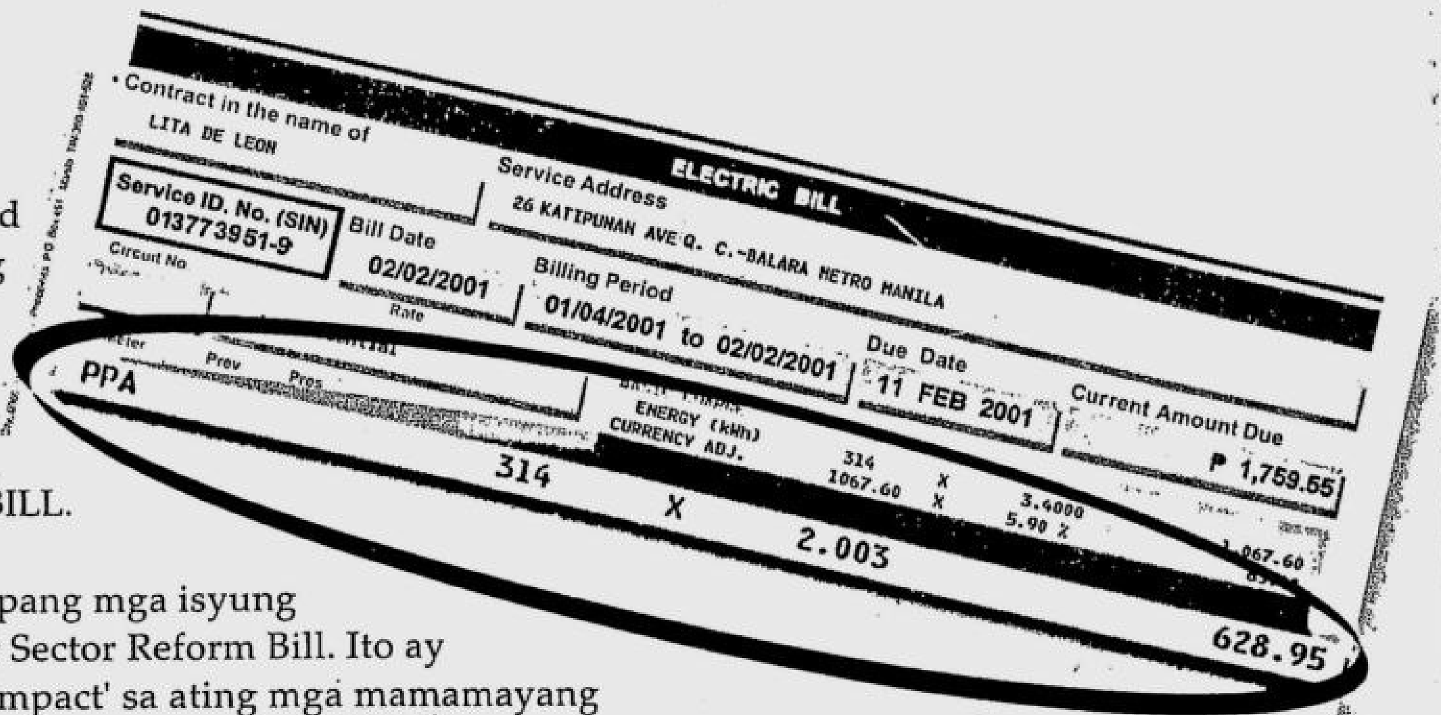
ISANG BUKAS NA LIHAM MULA KAY SENADOR JUAN PONCE ENRILE

at Association of Philippine Electric Cooperatives (APEC)



Contract in the name of
LITA DE LEON
ELECTRIC BILL
Service ID. No. (SIN) 013773951-9
Service Address
26 KATIPUNAN AVE Q. C.-BALARA METRO MANILA
Bill Date 02/02/2001
Billing Period 01/04/2001 to 02/02/2001
Due Date 11 FEB 2001
Current Amount Due P 1,759.55
PPA
ENERGY (kWh)
CURRENCY ADJ.
314 X 3.4000
1067.60 X 5.90 %
314 X 2.003
628.95

Mahal na Pangulong Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo,

Kami, kasama ng sambayanang Pilipino ay malugod na nagpapasalamat sa inyong pagtugon sa isyu ng Power Purchase Adjustment o PPA. Ang inyong pagsususpinde ng pagbabayad ng PPA ay napakalaking ginhawa sa bulsa ng mamamayan at tunay na isang positibong hudyat ng inyong masusing pag-aaral ng POWER SECTOR REFORM BILL.

Nguni't sana po ay huwag nating isantabi ang iba pang mga isyung dapat talakayin bago ipasa ang panukalang Power Sector Reform Bill. Ito ay mga isyung may malawakan at pangmatagalang 'impact' sa ating mga mamamayang kumukonsumo ng kuryente, at gayundin sa mga kooperatibang nagsisilbi sa power sector. Ilan sa mga ito ay ang sumusunod:

ABUSO	Ang pagkakarga ng iba't ibang "charges" na walang kinalaman sa halaga ng pagpoprodyus o pagkonsumo ng kuryente nguni't ipinapasa sa consumer sa ngalan ng PPA. **Para sa kaalaman ng lahat -** > Sa likod ng **Power Purchase Adjustment** o **PPA**, nakakarga ang overpriced contracts ng NAPOCOR at Meralco sa pagbili ng kuryente mula sa mga independent power producers (IPPs). > Ang PPA ay umaabot na ngayon ng P2.21 /kWh, o halos 1/3 ng ating total monthly bill sa kuryente. > Ang isang average household ay maaaring magbayad ng P200 hanggang P1,000 na PPA charges bawa't buwan. > Tinututulan ito ng mga electric cooperatives subali't kinakasangkapan sila upang kolektahin ang PPA.
BANTAY-ABUSO	Suriing mabuti ang mga charges na kasama sa PPA at tiyakin na ang karampatang charges lamang ang babayaran ng mga consumers. I-review ang mga kontrata sa mga IPPs upang alisin ang mga di-makatarungang provisions nito at ilantad ang overpricing ng kuryente sa ilan sa mga kontratang ito.
ABUSO	Kung ang electric distributor at generating companies ay nasa pag-aari ng iisang korporasyon lamang, ito ay magiging sanhi ng posibleng *price manipulation* at *unfair competition.*
BANTAY-ABUSO	Limitahan ang pagbili ng distributor mula sa generating company kung ang dalawang kompanya ay nasa pag-aari ng iisang tao, pamilya o korporasyon. Hindi dapat lumampas sa 30% ng requirement ang kuryenteng maaaring bilhin mula sa 'sister company' ng distributor.
ABUSO	Ang isang distributor tulad ng Meralco na kumokontrol ng halos 70% ng Luzon requirement, ay bumibili ng kuryente sa isang generating company tulad ng First Gas. Ang dalawang kompanya - na ang pag-aari ay kontrolado ng isang pamilya lamang - ay lumalagda sa tinatawag na *bilateral agreement.* Ang negosasyong ito ay hindi dumadaan sa *open bidding* kaya't maaaring maganap ang *price manipulation.*
BANTAY-ABUSO	**Open bidding** ang kinakailangan upang mapangalagaan ang interes ng mga mamamayang kumukunsumo ng kuryente.
ABUSO	MONOPOLY ang umiiral sa industriya ng kuryente, na imbes na makabuti, ay lalong nakasasama sa kapakanan nating mga consumers.
BANTAY-ABUSO	Limitahan ang pag-aari ng isang generating company nang hindi lalampas sa 30% ng nasasakupang "grid" at 40% ng pangangailangan ng buong bansa. Sa ganitong paraan lamang masisiguro na 'di bababa sa 4 na generating companies ang makakapag-compete nang patas.
ABUSO	Ang **Utility Income Tax** ng Meralco ay ipinapasa sa mga mamamayan.
BANTAY-ABUSO	Ipagbawal ang pagpapasa sa mamamayan ng mga buwis na hindi naman dapat bayaran ng consumers.
ABUSO	Ayon sa batas, may limitasyon ang maaaring kitain ng power utilities na nakapaloob sa Guaranteed **Return on Rate Base** (RORB). Nguni't ang totoo nilang kinikita - na kadalasa'y lagpas sa isinasaad ng batas - ay naitatago sa pamamagitan ng kargadong komputasyon at paglalahad ng kanilang Return on Rate Base.
BANTAY-ABUSO	Higpitan at gawing mas **transparent** ang paglalahad ng lahat ng elementong isinasama sa Return on Rate Base.
ABUSO	**Double family profits** ang kinikita ng mga 'sister companies' sa pagbili ng mga equipment at services sa isa't-isa. Sa ganitong situwasyon, ang paglilipat ng additional profits mula sa isang regulated business (tulad ng distribution utility) patungo sa isang non-regulated business (supplier) ay napapabayaang makalusot.
BANTAY-ABUSO	Kailangang ipasailalim sa public bidding ang malalaking kontrata sa pagbili ng equipment at services ng distribution utility companies.
ABUSO	Ang pagmamaliit sa kapangyarihan ng Energy Regulatory Board.
BANTAY-ABUSO	Bigyan ng tamang kapangyarihan ang Energy Regulatory Board at ang mga hihiranging 'regulators' upang maputol na ang mga mapang-abusong pamamaraan ng mga kumukontrol sa industriya.
ABUSO	Ang pang-iipit sa electric cooperatives sa pamamagitan ng hindi pagbibigay sa kanila ng sapat na panahon upang makapag-adjust at makasabay sa competition sa loob ng isang deregulated environment.
BANTAY-ABUSO	Bigyan ng sapat na panahon ang mga electric cooperatives upang makasabay sa competition sa isang deregulated environment. Ibalik ang tax exemption ng mga electric cooperatives at gawing higit na maka-demokratiko ang pagmamay-ari ng mga ito.

Mahal na Pangulo, hindi po madali ang tinatahak na landas ng Power Sector Reform Bill. Hindi rin po madaling banggain ang mga taong kumukontrol sa industriya ng kuryente. Subali't kung tayo ay magtutulungan, makikinabang ang sambayanang Pilipino pati na ang maliliit na kooperatibang umaasang mabigyan sila ng pagkakataong paunlarin ang kanayunan. Matagal na rin po silang nagtitiis. Mahabang panahon na rin po silang nabibiktima. Sama-sama po nating bantayan ang kanilang kapakanan.

Mabuhay po kayo, Gng. Pangulo.

GUPITIN, PAG-ARALAN AT PAG-USAPAN. MAKIALAM AT BANTAYAN ANG INYONG KAPAKANAN!

Iliham ang inyong pananaw kay Senator Juan Ponce Enrile sa Suite 401 Marsman Bldg., South Harbor, Manila 1018

ADVT

Across the NATION

TONY BERGONIA, Assistant Editor

ROUNDUP

Mangrove project in Ormoc

ORMOC CITY—A 10-hectare mangrove plantation is being established along the coastlines of Barangays San Juan and Naungan in this city to provide nurseries for marine species. The three-year project is financed by the city government under its Community-Based Forest Management Program with the help of the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office. About 10,000 mangrove trees were planted on every hectare, with the priority areas located in open sites, sheltered coves near fishing grounds to rehabilitate degraded mangrove forests in.the area.

Felix Codilla, PDI Visayas Bureau

Administrator acquitted

TAGBILARAN CITY—Former Bohol Red Cross administrator Francisca Baluyot was acquitted of malversation charges filed against her by the Visayas Ombudsman. In a decision March 23, Judge Raineldo Son of the Regional Trial Court Branch 47 here said the prosecution failed to establish that Baluyot was guilty of failing to account for P129,000 in public funds that were in her custody as administrator of the Philippine National Red Cross in Tagbilaran City. The judge said when an audit team found the alleged shortage, Baluyot was able to immediately replace the amount, which she took from a cabinet in the same room where the audit team conducted the cash audit. The PNRC padlocked the Bohol Red Cross office last month to implement Baluyot's dismissal.

Chito Fuentes, PDI Visayas Bureau

Mayor vindicated

DUMAGUETE CITY—The Commission on Audit has vindicated Mayor Felipe Antonio Remollo in the purchase of three controversial China-made heavy equipment, paving the way for the resumption of projects that are not affected by the election ban. COA-Central Visayas engineers Danilo Maglasang and Benjamin Momongan said in their report that they found no substantial defects that may seriously affect the performance of the bulldozer, wheel loader and vibratory compactor purchased by the city from the TKC Heavy Industries Corp. Remollo asked the COA to examine the equipment after city councilors raised doubts on the durability of the supposedly brand new equipment.

Alex Pal, PDI Visayas Bureau

30 villages hot spots

DAVAO CITY—The Philippine National Police has listed at least 30 villages here, in Davao del Norte and Davao Oriental as potential trouble spots in the May 14 elections. Chief Supt. Gregorio Dolina, PNP regional director, said the villages were already placed in the PNP and the Commission on Elections' "watchlist" for areas of concern in the region. He declined to identify the villages but said half of these are in hinterland barangays where New People's Army and Moro Islamic Liberation Front guerrillas operate.

Jowel Canuday, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Laguna High reunion

THE LAGUNA High School Class 1954 will hold its 47th class reunion on May 19 at the Laguna Cultural Center, Capitol Compound, Sta. Cruz, Laguna. All members of the class can come with their families in casual attire. No registration fee is required. For information, contact Napoleon Hubilla, tel. no. (02)807-2982 or fax no. (02)807-2984; Amelia Soriano Pagkatipunan, tel. no. (049)808-1090 or 808-1564; or Florita Santos Maslog, tel. no. (049)536-2678 or (049)536-0547.

K of C Convention

OVER 4,000 delegates from the country and their wives will converge in Cebu for the 5th National Convention of the Knights of Columbus. The three-day affair, to be hosted by the Visayas Jurisdiction along with the Luzon and Mindanao Deputies and KC Fraternal, will be held at the Cebu Waterfront Hotel, Lahug on May 25-27. Supreme Court Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. is the keynote speaker at the convention dinner. The secretariat of the national convention may be reached at the Visayas Jurisdiction-Knights of Columbus, 36 Archbishop Reyes Avenue, Lahug, Cebu City. Telephone no. (032)231-1182.

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Bicol region, Eastern Visayas and Eastern Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

SOURCE: **PAGASA**

⛅ Metro Manila Hi 33° Lo 25°	⛅ Baguio Hi 25° Lo 16°	⛅ Tuguegarao Hi 31° Lo 23°	⛅ Laoag Hi 33° Lo 24°
⛅ Clark Zone Hi 33° Lo 24°	⛅ Tagaytay Hi 32° Lo 22°	⛈ Legazpi Hi 31° Lo 26°	⛅ Calapan Hi 32° Lo 24°
⛅ Bacolod Hi 33° Lo 25°	⛅ Roxas Hi 32° Lo 26°	⛅ Cebu Hi 33° Lo 24°	⛈ Tacloban Hi 32° Lo 25°
⛅ Gen. Santos Hi 34° Lo 24°	⛅ Zamboanga Hi 33° Lo 25°	⛅ Cagayan de Oro Hi 33° Lo 24°	⛈ Davao Hi 32° Lo 24°

Compiled by: Ray Leyesa, PDI Research

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GMA to skip Bong Pineda base in b'day bash

LUBAO, Pampanga—In an apparent bid to disprove her links with suspected jueteng financier Rodolfo "Bong" Pineda, President Macapagal-Arroyo is not celebrating her 54th birthday in this town on April 5, breaking a tradition she has observed for so many years.

The plan to skirt Lubao, the hometown of her father, the late President Diosdado Macapagal, was finalized last week, according to a source from the presidential visit's local organizing committee.

"As early as two months ago, we were told she wanted to celebrate her birthday in Lubao through a Holy Mass and a breakfast with the residents, as she used to," said the source, one of those in charge of the preparations that began last week.

The source said the President began expressing hesitations after local Lakas-NUCD officials told her she would, as a matter of protocol, exchange pleasantries and appear in public with Lubao Mayor Lilia Pineda, the wife of the suspected gambling lord.

The mayor is running for a seat in the Sangguniang Panlalawigan. Her son Dennis is running for mayor. Both are running as independent and are securing their political hold in Pampanga's second district that Bong Pineda has reportedly developed as a jueteng lair since the early 1980s.

"The local officials advised her (the President) not to go ahead with the plan because they fear it would revive speculations that she was friendly with the Pinedas. They wanted to spare her the embarrassment of being seen with the Pinedas," the source said.

Bong Pineda, after reportedly seeking medical treatment and a hair transplant in the United States in October last year, returned to the country in late January. He was seen by reporters in a nightspot last week in Angeles City.

Published reports said Pineda contributed to the campaign coffers of Ms Macapagal when she ran for senator and vice president.

The President repeatedly denied receiving funds from him.

Questions on Ms Macapagal's close friendship with the Pinedas surfaced again last October when Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago grilled Mayor Pineda in one of the televised sessions of the Senate blue ribbon committee that was investigating the juetengate scandal.

In 1999, Ms Macapagal spent her birthday in Lubao. After Mass and after visiting the replica of the hut where her father grew up, she proceeded to the town's gymnasium where Mayor Pineda organized a feeding program for indigent children, including Aetas.

In a press conference last week, the President said she was not having a Mass said for her in Lubao because Pampanga Archbishop Paciano Aniceto invited her instead to celebrate the occasion at the Sto. Rosario Metropolitan Cathedral in the City of San Fernando, some 20 km from Lubao.

The source confirmed that Aniceto extended the invitation.

Instead of Lubao, the President is going to the City of San Fernando for Mass and breakfast with poor residents. By 10 a.m., she will proceed to Guagua town from where she will have a quick tour of the FVR Megadike.

Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Gloria: No more floods in Ormoc

BY JOEY GABIETA
AND VICENTE LABRO
PDI Visayas Bureau

ORMOC CITY—President Macapagal-Arroyo inaugurated on Tuesday a P2 billion flood control project here, assuring city residents that the killer flood that brought tragedy to the city a decade ago would never happen again.

"The residents of Ormoc should never again face the devastation in 1991 when thousands died and still thousands are missing," said the President, who went on her first trip to Eastern Visayas since she assumed office.

The flash flood that hit this city on Nov. 5, 1991 killed some 5,000 persons, most of whom were buried in two mass graves at the city's public cemetery. More than 4,000 persons are still missing to this day.

City Mayor Eufrocino Codilla Sr. expressed his gratitude for the completion of the flood mitigation control project.

"Now, Ormoc City will be free from fear and apprehension from the 1991 flood (for this) will never happen again . . . Gone are the fears that for so long (haunted the Ormocanons) and now (they are) free from mental and emotional burden," Codilla said.

The flood control project is the first of its kind in the country. It includes silt dams that will prevent the clogging of the river's channels. It traverses the Anilao and Malbasag rivers.

The bulk of the fund for the project came from the Japanese government, through the Japan International Cooperation Agency, with the local government pouring in P25 million and the Department of Public Works and Highways, some P260 million.

The President also witnessed the signing of a memorandum of agreement between Public Works Secretary Simeon Datumanong and Codilla for the turnover of the project's first phase costing P427 million. The money was spent to build three silt dams and four concrete bridges, improve the river's flow and pay for rights-of-way.

The second and final phase, costing P1.41 billion, involved the construction of one more concrete bridge, river improvement that includes slope protection and drainage works and the installation of hydraulic drops for the 3.81-kilometer Anilao River and 3.64-km Malbasag River. This phase is 95.10 percent complete and will be finished in August this year.

Japanese Ambassador Hashihasi Ara, who represented his government during the inauguration, told city residents in his speech that the Japanese government helped in the construction of the flood control project because they do not want the 1991 tragedy to be repeated in the city.

Ara added that the Japanese people know exactly what it is like to be in the middle of a natural tragedy since his country is also prone to natural disasters.

From Ormoc City, the President and her party proceeded to Tabango, Leyte and San Francisco, Southern Leyte for the turnover and launching of government projects, among them livelihood projects for farmers and fishermen.

The President and her party then proceeded to Tacloban City at around 1 p.m. where she met local officials and inducted the officers of the Leyte Chamber of Commerce and Industry. She also turned over some government projects to beneficiaries.

Ex-NPAs liable for guns, says defense aide

BY CARLA GOMEZ
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—The breakaway Revolutionary Proletarian Army-Alex Boncayao Brigade (RPA-ABB) is not exempted from the gun ban imposed by the Commission on Elections during the campaign period.

Eduardo Ermita, presidential adviser on the peace process, issued this statement when asked to comment on the RPA-ABB's display of firearms during its founding anniversary last March 6.

He told the INQUIRER on Tuesday that the police should run after RPA-ABB rebels who violated the Comelec gun ban.

But Carapali Lualhati, RPA-ABB chief, said in an earlier interview that Philippine laws do not apply to the guerrillas because "we are revolutionaries."

He said they were bound by the Dec. 10 peace agreement, which provided, among others, the release of 200 political prisoners and P500 million in development funds.

Lualhati said the rebels' commitment in the peace agreement was to assist in the government's "peacekeeping efforts" which the rebels fulfill by arresting wanted criminals.

Sixteen persons have been turned over by the RPA-ABB to the police since last year.

Lualhati also explained that their display of firearms in Don Salvador Benedicto town during the RPA-ABB's 4th anniversary was not a violation of the Comelec gun ban because it was done inside the "RPA-ABB regional peace office."

The office, Lualhati said, was recognized by the government peace panel then headed by former Executive Secretary Edgardo Angara.

Bets invited to climb Apo

COTABATO CITY—An environmentalist and mountaineering group in North Cotabato has launched trek to the country's highest peak for politicians to appreciate nature during the Holy Week.

Dubbed as "Pulitiko Tayo na sa Apo," the four-day Special Holy Week climb is initiated by Guardians of Lake Venado.

Lake Venado is a lake beside Mt. Apo's peak which is 10,311 feet above sea level.

Marlon Austria, chief guardian of the environmentalist group, said the climb aims to encourage those who are seeking public office to appreciate nature and commit themselves to promote the national park and help protect it.

"It also seeks to show that political aspirants are physically fit for public service," Austria said in a statement.

The Guardians of Lake Venado is inviting other political aspirants, both local and senatorial candidates, to join the challenge.

First to accept the challenge was North Cotabato reelectionist Gov. Emmanuel Piñol who said mountain climbing is an opportunity for those seeking public office to prove their fitness to serve and their love for nature.

Treks to Mt. Apo were banned pending clean up and rehabilitation. But Piñol said they will seek an exemption from the ban as they also plan to help clean up the national park.

Edwin Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Farmers earn more by killing rats

SANTIAGO CITY—Farmers in a rice-farming village here earned P10,000 recently by selling 5,000 rat tails while others earned less than that amount by ridding their farms of rats that destroy their rice crops.

Farmers have been earning on the side through the city government's "Operation Daga: Buntot mo, Bayaran ko" project that aims to minimize production losses as a result of rat infestation.

Mayor Amelita Navarro released P450,000 mainly to stop the rat infestation in the city's farming villages.

The city government pays farmers P2 for each rat tail surrendered.

The farmers were also given zinc phosphate poison bags for killing rats, aside from the project. Agriculturists also started technical training on how to exterminate rats.

Reports from the city government said farmers in Barangay Salvador, one of the hardest-hit villages, had sold 5,000 tails to the city government while others had turned in from 100 to 1,000 tails.

Dr. Solomon Maylem, city veterinarian, said the activity was so effective as the number of rats attacking farms had been reduced.

Maylem said the farmers' harvests would likely be reduced by at least 40 percent if rat attacks continued. He said 30,000 rats have attacked farming villages in the city. *Villamor Visaya Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

CAMPAIGN TRAIL

It's San Mig vs Mule in La Union

SAN FERNANDO CITY—Tired of "David vs Goliath" metaphors in the coming elections? Try Mule vs San Miguel Beer.

In La Union, where the Ortega political clan has been in power for the past 100 years, only few came to challenge the political equation.

One such challenger is 28-year-old businessman Michael Magsaysay (Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino), who is running against reelectionist congressman and veteran politician Manuel Ortega (Nationalist People's Coalition) for the congressional seat in the first district of La Union.

Magsaysay, scion of the Magsaysay political family of Zambales, has compared his opponent to San Miguel Beer, which he said has established at least a century of tradition and name-recall.

However, he argued that it is the same "traditional politics which has stunted the growth of the city" and the district.

Young but bold like the newest spiked beverage Smirnoff Mule in the market, Magsaysay said he would bring in his business background in creating a "business environment for the province."

Among his proposed legislative measures is a bill providing for the direct channeling of congressional allocations to the villages rather than through government agencies or local government units.

This, he said, would ensure the immediate, effective and corruption-free implementation of projects in the barangays.

He would also push for the passage of the anti-dynasty bill that would give all people "equal opportunity to serve."

On Aug. 15, the Ortega clan would mark its "100 years of public service," or what Ortega has publicly called a "benevolent dynasty" started by his great grandfather Don Joaquin Ortega.

According to recorded history, Don Joaquin was the first civil governor of the province appointed by the Taft Commission in 1901.

He went on to become the first elected governor of the province, and later, lieutenant governor of the former sub-provinces of Abra, Bontoc (Mt. Province) and Benguet.

From 1920-1926, Don Joaquin served as a special agent of the Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes created by the Osmeña Act.

He had 14 children by his wife Francisca Lacsamana of Bangar, La Union. His third son, Francisco, is the father of Manuel who has 14 siblings, many of whom have served political terms.

In the May 14 elections, the list of candidates vying for various positions in government in La Union would show that the scions of Don Joaquin would still be the powers to contend with in the decades to come. *Gia Damaso-Dumo, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Vidal tells Estrada bets: No mudslinging, please

BY NAGIEL BAÑACIA
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—Cebu Archbishop Ricardo Cardinal Vidal yesterday advised opposition senatorial candidates to refrain from attacking their rivals during the campaign.

Vidal urged senatorial candidates of the Puwersa Ng Masa to be "issue-oriented" in a meeting with the candidates at his residence here Sunday.

"I advise them not to attack anybody and preserve their good health," Vidal recalled telling the candidates during their 25-minute meeting.

Former President Joseph Estrada accompanied his wife and senatorial candidate Dr. Loi Ejercito during the courtesy call.

The Estradas were joined by reelectionist senators Juan Ponce Enrile and Miriam Defensor-Santiago, former senators Edgardo Angara and Santanina Rasul and Ricardo Puno, Jamby Madrigal and Ombra Tamano.

Vidal said they did not discuss any of the crucial issues affecting the country during the 25-minute visit of the opposition candidates.

He said he did not even find time to talk about issues concerning the ousted President due to the "limited time" they had at the meeting.

"He (former President Estrada) just introduced the candidates to me. Then, we talked about the policies that the candidates would espouse if they get elected in the Senate," Vidal said.

Because of the presence of Rasul, Vidal said they briefly discussed Mindanao's problems, particularly the "secret agreement" entered into by the Macapagal administration with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

He said he shared the opposition's call for transparency in the negotiations with Muslim rebels.

"We need to know what it was all about. And what was written behind it," he said.

Vidal said the former president and the opposition senatorial candidates did not ask for his endorsement.

"They know that I am non-partisan. This is my 20th year in Cebu and I've been known for (being non-partisan). I preserve it up to this day," Vidal said.

He told the candidates that as archbishop, his role was just to pray that the country would have good leaders.

Vidal said it was the second time he met with the deposed president this year. The first was when he was in Malacañang on Jan. 19 trying to convince Estrada not to force the Filipino people to accept a snap election.

It was the first visit of Estrada with Cardinal Vidal and in Cebu after he was ousted as president in January.

The former president joined his wife and the opposition senatorial candidates in their first campaign sortie in Cebu.

Cops initiate peace covenant

DOÑA REMEDIOS TRINIDAD, Bulacan—Police officials on Monday led the wife of the slain mayor here and the suspect in her husband's murder in a peace covenant to avert violence in the May 14 elections.

Evelyn Paulino, widow of Mayor Esteban Paulino, and PO3 Felix Valencia, the prime suspect in Mayor Paulino's murder in December last year, would face each other in the mayoral contest in this town.

Supt. Emelito Sarmiento, Bulacan police director, presided over the peace covenant signing at the parish church here. Candidates for various positions in Doña Remedios Trinidad, considered as an election hot spot, also attended the event.

Paulino, who is running under the Lakas-NUCD, assured that their camp would never resort to violence, as she does not have "guns, goons and gold" compared to other candidates.

She said she resigned as dean of the College of Mass Communications at Miriam College due to the strong clamor of her husband's followers for her to continue the implementation of his projects.

Valencia of the Partido ng Masang Pilipino, who recently resigned from the police service, is facing charges before the Department of Justice in connection with Paulino's ambush-slaying.

He also assured residents in this town that his supporters would not resort to violence in the coming elections. *Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Across the NATION

TONY BERGONIA, Assistant Editor

ROUNDUP

Mangrove project in Ormoc

ORMOC CITY—A 10-hectare mangrove plantation is being established along the coastlines of Barangays San Juan and Naungan in this city to provide nurseries for marine species. The three-year project is financed by the city government under its Community-Based Forest Management Program with the help of the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office. About 10,000 mangrove trees were planted on every hectare, with the priority areas located in open sites, sheltered coves near fishing grounds to rehabilitate degraded mangrove forests in.the area.

Felix Codilla, PDI Visayas Bureau

Administrator acquitted

TAGBILARAN CITY—Former Bohol Red Cross administrator Francisca Baluyot was acquitted of malversation charges filed against her by the Visayas Ombudsman. In a decision March 23, Judge Raineldo Son of the Regional Trial Court Branch 47 here said the prosecution failed to establish that Baluyot was guilty of failing to account for P129,000 in public funds that were in her custody as administrator of the Philippine National Red Cross in Tagbilaran City. The judge said when an audit team found the alleged shortage, Baluyot was able to immediately replace the amount, which she took from a cabinet in the same room where the audit team conducted the cash audit. The PNRC padlocked the Bohol Red Cross office last month to implement Baluyot's dismissal.

Chito Fuentes, PDI Visayas Bureau

Mayor vindicated

DUMAGUETE CITY—The Commission on Audit has vindicated Mayor Felipe Antonio Remollo in the purchase of three controversial China-made heavy equipment, paving the way for the resumption of projects that are not affected by the election ban. COA-Central Visayas engineers Danilo Maglasang and Benjamin Momongan said in their report that they found no substantial defects that may seriously affect the performance of the bulldozer, wheel loader and vibratory compactor purchased by the city from the TKC Heavy Industries Corp. Remollo asked the COA to examine the equipment after city councilors raised doubts on the durability of the supposedly brand new equipment.

Alex Pal, PDI Visayas Bureau

30 villages hot spots

DAVAO CITY—The Philippine National Police has listed at least 30 villages here, in Davao del Norte and Davao Oriental as potential trouble spots in the May 14 elections. Chief Supt. Gregorio Dolina, PNP regional director, said the villages were already placed in the PNP and the Commission on Elections' "watchlist" for areas of concern in the region. He declined to identify the villages but said half of these are in hinterland barangays where New People's Army and Moro Islamic Liberation Front guerrillas operate.

Jowel Canuday, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Laguna High reunion

THE LAGUNA High School Class 1954 will hold its 47th class reunion on May 19 at the Laguna Cultural Center, Capitol Compound, Sta. Cruz, Laguna. All members of the class can come with their families in casual attire. No registration fee is required. For information, contact Napoleon Hubilla, tel. no. (02)807-2982 or fax no. (02)807-2984; Amelia Soriano Pagkatipunan, tel. no. (049)808-1090 or 808-1564; or Florita Santos Maslog, tel. no. (049)536-2678 or (049)536-0547.

K of C Convention

OVER 4,000 delegates from the country and their wives will converge in Cebu for the 5th National Convention of the Knights of Columbus. The three-day affair, to be hosted by the Visayas Jurisdiction along with the Luzon and Mindanao Deputies and KC Fraternal, will be held at the Cebu Waterfront Hotel, Lahug on May 25-27. Supreme Court Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. is the keynote speaker at the convention dinner. The secretariat of the national convention may be reached at the Visayas Jurisdiction-Knights of Columbus, 36 Archbishop Reyes Avenue, Lahug, Cebu City. Telephone no. (032)231-1182.

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Bicol region, Eastern Visayas and Eastern Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila Hi 33° Lo 25°	Baguio Hi 25° Lo 16°	Tuguegarao Hi 31° Lo 23°	Laoag Hi 33° Lo 24°
Clark Zone Hi 33° Lo 24'	Tagaytay Hi 32° Lo 22°	Legazpi Hi 31° Lo 26°	Calapan Hi 32° Lo 24°
Bacolod Hi 33° Lo 25°	Roxas Hi 32° Lo 26°	Cebu Hi 33° Lo 24°	Tacloban Hi 32° Lo 25°
Gen. Santos Hi 34° Lo 24°	Zamboanga Hi 33° Lo 25°	Cagayan de Oro Hi 33° Lo 24°	Davao Hi 32° Lo 24°

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GMA to skip Bong Pineda base in b'day bash

LUBAO, Pampanga—In an apparent bid to disprove her links with suspected jueteng financier Rodolfo "Bong" Pineda, President Macapagal-Arroyo is not celebrating her 54th birthday in this town on April 5, breaking a tradition she has observed for so many years.

The plan to skirt Lubao, the hometown of her father, the late President Diosdado Macapagal, was finalized last week, according to a source from the presidential visit's local organizing committee.

"As early as two months ago, we were told she wanted to celebrate her birthday in Lubao through a Holy Mass and a breakfast with the residents, as she used to," said the source, one of those in charge of the preparations that began last week.

The source said the President began expressing hesitations after local Lakas-NUCD officials told her she would, as a matter of protocol, exchange pleasantries and appear in public with Lubao Mayor Lilia Pineda, the wife of the suspected gambling lord.

The mayor is running for a seat in the Sangguniang Panlalawigan. Her son Dennis is running for mayor. Both are running as independent and are securing their political hold in Pampanga's second district that Bong Pineda has reportedly developed as a jueteng lair since the early 1980s.

"The local officials advised her (the President) not to go ahead with the plan because they fear it would revive speculations that she was friendly with the Pinedas. They wanted to spare her the embarrassment of being seen with the Pinedas," the source said.

Bong Pineda, after reportedly seeking medical treatment and a hair transplant in the United States in October last year, returned to the country in late January. He was seen by reporters in a nightspot last week in Angeles City.

Published reports said Pineda contributed to the campaign coffers of Ms Macapagal when she ran for senator and vice president.

The President repeatedly denied receiving funds from him.

Questions on Ms Macapagal's close friendship with the Pinedas surfaced again last October when Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago grilled Mayor Pineda in one of the televised sessions of the Senate blue ribbon committee that was investigating the juetengate scandal.

In 1999, Ms Macapagal spent her birthday in Lubao. After Mass and after visiting the replica of the hut where her father grew up, she proceeded to the town's gymnasium where Mayor Pineda organized a feeding program for indigent children, including Aetas.

In a press conference last week, the President said she was not having a Mass said for her in Lubao because Pampanga Archbishop Paciano Aniceto invited her instead to celebrate the occasion at the Sto. Rosario Metropolitan Cathedral in the City of San Fernando, some 20 km from Lubao.

The source confirmed that Aniceto extended the invitation.

Instead of Lubao, the President is going to the City of San Fernando for Mass and breakfast with poor residents. By 10 a.m., she will proceed to Guagua town from where she will have a quick tour of the FVR Megadike.

Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Gloria: No more floods in Ormoc

By Joey Gabieta
and Vicente Labro
PDI Visayas Bureau

ORMOC CITY—President Macapagal-Arroyo inaugurated on Tuesday a P2 billion flood control project here, assuring city residents that the killer flood that brought tragedy to the city a decade ago would never happen again.

"The residents of Ormoc should never again face the devastation in 1991 when thousands died and still thousands are missing," said the President, who went on her first trip to Eastern Visayas since she assumed office.

The flash flood that hit this city on Nov. 5, 1991 killed some 5,000 persons, most of whom were buried in two mass graves at the city's public cemetery. More than 4,000 persons are still missing to this day.

City Mayor Eufrocino Codilla Sr. expressed his gratitude for the completion of the flood mitigation control project.

"Now, Ormoc City will be free from fear and apprehension from the 1991 flood (for this) will never happen again . . . Gone are the fears that for so long (haunted the Ormocanons) and now (they are) free from mental and emotional burden," Codilla said.

The flood control project is the first of its kind in the country. It includes silt dams that will prevent the clogging of the river's channels. It traverses the Anilao and Malbasag rivers.

The bulk of the fund for the project came from the Japanese government, through the Japan International Cooperation Agency, with the local government pouring in P25 million and the Department of Public Works and Highways, some P260 million.

The President also witnessed the signing of a memorandum of agreement between Public Works Secretary Simeon Datumanong and Codilla for the turnover of the project's first phase costing P427 million. The money was spent to build three silt dams and four concrete bridges, improve the river's flow and pay for rights-of-way.

The second and final phase, costing P1.41 billion, involved the construction of one more concrete bridge, river improvement that includes slope protection and drainage works and the installation of hydraulic drops for the 3.81-kilometer Anilao River and 3.64-km Malbasag River. This phase is 95.10 percent complete and will be finished in August this year.

Japanese Ambassador Hashihasi Ara, who represented his government during the inauguration, told city residents in his speech that the Japanese government helped in the construction of the flood control project because they do not want the 1991 tragedy to be repeated in the city.

Ara added that the Japanese people know exactly what it is like to be in the middle of a natural tragedy since his country is also prone to natural disasters.

From Ormoc City, the President and her party proceeded to Tabango, Leyte and San Francisco, Southern Leyte for the turnover and launching of government projects, among them livelihood projects for farmers and fishermen.

The President and her party then proceeded to Tacloban City at around 1 p.m. where she met local officials and inducted the officers of the Leyte Chamber of Commerce and Industry. She also turned over some government projects to beneficiaries.

Ex-NPAs liable for guns, says defense aide

By Carla Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—The breakaway Revolutionary Proletarian Army-Alex Boncayao Brigade (RPA-ABB) is not exempted from the gun ban imposed by the Commission on Elections during the campaign period.

Eduardo Ermita, presidential adviser on the peace process, issued this statement when asked to comment on the RPA-ABB's display of firearms during its founding anniversary last March 6.

He told the INQUIRER on Tuesday that the police should run after RPA-ABB rebels who violated the Comelec gun ban.

But Carapali Lualhati, RPA-ABB chief, said in an earlier interview that Philippine laws do not apply to the guerrillas because "we are revolutionaries."

He said they were bound by the Dec. 10 peace agreement, which provided, among others, the release of 200 political prisoners and P500 million in development funds.

Lualhati said the rebels' commitment in the peace agreement was to assist in the government's "peacekeeping efforts" which the rebels fulfill by arresting wanted criminals.

Sixteen persons have been turned over by the RPA-ABB to the police since last year.

Lualhati also explained that their display of firearms in Don Salvador Benedicto town during the RPA-ABB's 4th anniversary was not a violation of the Comelec gun ban because it was done inside the "RPA-ABB regional peace office."

The office, Lualhati said, was recognized by the government peace panel then headed by former Executive Secretary Edgardo Angara.

Bets invited to climb Apo

COTABATO CITY—An environmentalist and mountaineering group in North Cotabato has launched trek to the country's highest peak for politicians to appreciate nature during the Holy Week.

Dubbed as "Pulitiko Tayo na sa Apo," the four-day Special Holy Week climb is initiated by Guardians of Lake Venado.

Lake Venado is a lake beside Mt. Apo's peak which is 10,311 feet above sea level.

Marlon Austria, chief guardian of the environmentalist group, said the climb aims to encourage those who are seeking public office to appreciate nature and commit themselves to promote the national park and help protect it.

"It also seeks to show that political aspirants are physically fit for public service," Austria said in a statement.

The Guardians of Lake Venado is inviting other political aspirants, both local and senatorial candidates, to join the challenge.

First to accept the challenge was North Cotabato reelectionist Gov. Emmanuel Piñol who said mountain climbing is an opportunity for those seeking public office to prove their fitness to serve and their love for nature.

Treks to Mt. Apo were banned pending clean up and rehabilitation. But Piñol said they will seek an exemption from the ban as they also plan to help clean up the national park.

Edwin Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Farmers earn more by killing rats

SANTIAGO CITY—Farmers in a rice-farming village here earned P10,000 recently by selling 5,000 rat tails while others earned less than that amount by ridding their farms of rats that destroy their rice crops.

Farmers have been earning on the side through the city government's "Operation Daga: Buntot mo, Bayaran ko" project that aims to minimize production losses as a result of rat infestation.

Mayor Amelita Navarro released P450,000 mainly to stop the rat infestation in the city's farming villages.

The city government pays farmers P2 for each rat tail surrendered.

The farmers were also given zinc phosphate poison bags for killing rats, aside from the project. Agriculturists also started technical training on how to exterminate rats.

Reports from the city government said farmers in Barangay Salvador, one of the hardest-hit villages, had sold 5,000 tails to the city government while others had turned in from 100 to 1,000 tails.

Dr. Solomon Maylem, city veterinarian, said the activity was so effective as the number of rats attacking farms had been reduced.

Maylem said the farmers' harvests would likely be reduced by at least 40 percent if rat attacks continued. He said 30,000 rats have attacked farming villages in the city. *Villamor Visaya Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

CAMPAIGN TRAIL

It's San Mig vs Mule in La Union

SAN FERNANDO CITY—Tired of "David vs Goliath" metaphors in the coming elections? Try Mule vs San Miguel Beer.

In La Union, where the Ortega political clan has been in power for the past 100 years, only few came to challenge the political equation.

One such challenger is 28-year-old businessman Michael Magsaysay (Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino), who is running against reelectionist congressman and veteran politician Manuel Ortega (Nationalist People's Coalition) for the congressional seat in the first district of La Union.

Magsaysay, scion of the Magsaysay political family of Zambales, has compared his opponent to San Miguel Beer, which he said has established at least a century of tradition and name-recall.

However, he argued that it is the same "traditional politics which has stunted the growth of the city" and the district.

Young but bold like the newest spiked beverage Smirnoff Mule in the market, Magsaysay said he would bring in his business background in creating a "business environment for the province."

Among his proposed legislative measures is a bill providing for the direct channeling of congressional allocations to the villages rather than through government agencies or local government units.

This, he said, would ensure the immediate, effective and corruption-free implementation of projects in the barangays.

He would also push for the passage of the anti-dynasty bill that would give all people "equal opportunity to serve."

On Aug. 15, the Ortega clan would mark its "100 years of public service," or what Ortega has publicly called a "benevolent dynasty" started by his great grandfather Don Joaquin Ortega.

According to recorded history, Don Joaquin was the first civil governor of the province appointed by the Taft Commission in 1901.

He went on to become the first elected governor of the province, and later, lieutenant governor of the former sub-provinces of Abra, Bontoc (Mt. Province) and Benguet.

From 1920-1926, Don Joaquin served as a special agent of the Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes created by the Osmeña Act.

He had 14 children by his wife Francisca Lacsamana of Bangar, La Union. His third son, Francisco, is the father of Manuel who has 14 siblings, many of whom have served political terms.

In the May 14 elections, the list of candidates vying for various positions in government in La Union would show that the scions of Don Joaquin would still be the powers to contend with in the decades to come. *Gia Damaso-Dumo, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Vidal tells Estrada bets: No mudslinging, please

By Nagiel Bañacia
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—Cebu Archbishop Ricardo Cardinal Vidal yesterday advised opposition senatorial candidates to refrain from attacking their rivals during the campaign.

Vidal urged senatorial candidates of the Puwersa Ng Masa to be "issue-oriented" in a meeting with the candidates at his residence here Sunday.

"I advise them not to attack anybody and preserve their good health," Vidal recalled telling the candidates during their 25-minute meeting.

Former President Joseph Estrada accompanied his wife and senatorial candidate Dr. Loi Ejercito during the courtesy call.

The Estradas were joined by reelectionist senators Juan Ponce Enrile and Miriam Defensor-Santiago, former senators Edgardo Angara and Santanina Rasul and Ricardo Puno, Jamby Madrigal and Ombra Tamano.

Vidal said they did not discuss any of the crucial issues affecting the country during the 25-minute visit of the opposition candidates.

He said he did not even find time to talk about issues concerning the ousted President due to the "limited time" they had at the meeting.

"He (former President Estrada) just introduced the candidates to me. Then, we talked about the policies that the candidates would espouse if they get elected in the Senate," Vidal said.

Because of the presence of Rasul, Vidal said they briefly discussed Mindanao's problems, particularly the "secret agreement" entered into by the Macapagal administration with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

He said he shared the opposition's call for transparency in the negotiations with Muslim rebels.

"We need to know what it was all about. And what was written behind it," he said.

Vidal said the former president and the opposition senatorial candidates did not ask for his endorsement.

"They know that I am non-partisan. This is my 20th year in Cebu and I've been known for (being non-partisan). I preserve it up to this day," Vidal said.

He told the candidates that as archbishop, his role was just to pray that the country would have good leaders.

Vidal said it was the second time he met with the deposed president this year. The first was when he was in Malacañang on Jan. 19 trying to convince Estrada not to force the Filipino people to accept a snap election.

It was the first visit of Estrada with Cardinal Vidal and in Cebu after he was ousted as president in January.

The former president joined his wife and the opposition senatorial candidates in their first campaign sortie in Cebu.

Cops initiate peace covenant

DOÑA REMEDIOS TRINIDAD. Bulacan—Police officials on Monday led the wife of the slain mayor here and the suspect in her husband's murder in a peace covenant to avert violence in the May 14 elections.

Evelyn Paulino, widow of Mayor Esteban Paulino, and PO3 Felix Valencia, the prime suspect in Mayor Paulino's murder in December last year, would face each other in the mayoral contest in this town.

Supt. Emelito Sarmiento, Bulacan police director, presided over the peace covenant signing at the parish church here. Candidates for various positions in Doña Remedios Trinidad, considered as an election hot spot, also attended the event.

Paulino, who is running under the Lakas-NUCD, assured that their camp would never resort to violence, as she does not have "guns, goons and gold" compared to other candidates.

She said she resigned as dean of the College of Mass Communications at Miriam College due to the strong clamor of her husband's followers for her to continue the implementation of his projects.

Valencia of the Partido ng Masang Pilipino, who recently resigned from the police service, is facing charges before the Department of Justice in connection with Paulino's ambush-slaying.

He also assured residents in this town that his supporters would not resort to violence in the coming elections. *Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Estrada charged; next stop prison

(From page A1)

movies or in the impeachment trial," said Sandiganbayan Presiding Justice Francis Garchitorena, hinting of the arduous legal process ahead.

It is now a supreme irony that the Sandiganbayan Centennial Building on Commonwealth Avenue in Quezon City, which then President Estrada inaugurated in July 1999, would now serve as venue for his plunder and graft trials.

A lobby marker bearing his name serves to commemorate the building's inauguration.

The same building has seen many protest actions from groups decrying the slowness with which the justices inside had deliberated other historic, politically charged suits, such as the now 15-year-old Marcos wealth case and the coconut levy case.

Garchitorena said all cases filed by the Ombudsman would be raffled off tomorrow at 1:30 p.m. among the anti-graft court's five divisions, which are chaired by himself and Justices Edilberto Sandoval, Anacleto Badoy, Narciso Nario and Minita V. Chico-Navarro.

It is thus "mathematically possible" that each division will be handling an Estrada case or that some of them will be handling more than one case, he said.

Arrest warrants

Garchitorena said the Estrada cases would not get special treatment during his watch, and refused to say when arrest warrants would be issued against those charged.

But a court official who asked not to be identified said that if any warrant was forthcoming, it would be issued after the Holy Week.

Should the arrest warrants be issued, Garchitorena ruled out the possibility of Estrada being put under house arrest instead of being imprisoned.

"In other countries, you have a house arrest when a dictator takes over and he confines the previous ruler. We don't have that situation," he told reporters.

Thus, he said, the former president would probably be detained at the Quezon City Jail.

He said that while the Sandiganbayan Building had a holding cell at the sheriff's office, it was not designed to double as a real jail.

"But remember, there is only one plunder case, and all the other cases are bailable. Therefore he and whoever else is charged may post bail," Garchitorena said.

Desierto filed a total of 11 complaints—seven implicating Estrada—upon the recommendation of the Special Preliminary Investigation Panel (SPIP) led by Overall Deputy Ombudsman Margarito P. Gervacio, which found prima facie evidence to file the charges in court.

The filing of charges came in the wake of the Supreme Court's Tuesday ruling junking Estrada's motion for reconsideration on his twin suits laying claim to the presidency and to immunity from charges.

The ruling capped more than two months of legal battle put up by Estrada's lawyers to shield him from criminal prosecution.

"We resolved the cases after the dismissal of (Estrada's) petition . . . and after a determination that the former president had already been given more than ample opportunity to counter the charges against him," Desierto said at a press conference yesterday at the Ombudsman Office in Manila.

7 complaints

Desierto said the charges stemmed from seven complaints filed by cause-oriented groups on the tobacco tax diversion and the jueteng collection.

The eighth complaint is for plunder filed by the Department of Justice. It named Estrada as the sole receiver of P189.7 million as a result of the purchase of shares of stock in Belle Corp.

Desierto said he was confident that the cases would prosper given his office's voluminous evidence.

"The cases will stand trial," he said, a battery of top-caliber lawyers at his side. "They're even stronger than the cases filed against the Marcoses."

He also said that Estrada's final destination would be the National Bilibid Prisons, and that the former president would also face the prospect of a death sentence.

However, Desierto said, because of the moratorium on executions, Estrada may spend some time in jail, at least during the Macapagal administration.

"If the Sandiganbayan is determined, cases can be resolved in a year's time," he said.

In his 97-page joint resolution, Desierto said Estrada committed plunder through "a combination of criminal acts in which he earned P4 billion—P130 million from the tobacco taxes, P545 million from jueteng bribes, P189.7 million from the purchase of Belle shares and the P3.2 billion Jose Velarde account" at the Equitable PCI Bank.

He said the Ombudsman's special panel had decided to consolidate the eight plunder cases into one to strengthen the plunder complaint.

Also, he said, "for plunder to exist there must be three instances of criminal acts."

"Plunder is illegal enrichment by a public official using his public office," Desierto said.

Prosecution panel

A battery of lawyers composed of 13 senior officials of the Office of the Ombudsman led by Desierto, five DOJ officials led by Justice Secretary Hernando Perez, Solicitor General Simeon Marcelo and Presidential Management Staff Jonathan Teñefrancia will compose the special prosecution panel.

Desierto approved yesterday SPIP Office Order No. 45 to constitute the special panel that will prosecute the eight complaints before the anti-graft court.

"Additional assistance to the prosecution is also expected to come from the group of private lawyers who (participated) in the impeachment proceedings (against Estrada)," Desierto said.

At the Sandiganbayan, Garchitorena expressed doubt that hearings would still be conducted by the individual divisions of the court in establishing probable cause for each of the charges.

"The division might be satisfied by just looking at the records . . . There will be a hearing only if the division in question has doubts about the probable cause," he said.

Garchitorena also said it would be too early to tell whether there would be daily trials for the Estrada cases.

Apparently to address an impatient public, he said the Sandiganbayan trials—if they come to pass—would neither be as swift as Estrada's impeachment trial at the Senate, nor would it be decided by a simple majority vote of the judges.

"Do not be misled . . . Here we cannot get our way easily. We have to put our decisions in writing," Garchitorena said.

Chavit

Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson, whose jueteng expose spelled the beginning of the end for Estrada, said the filing of charges against his erstwhile friend served as his ultimate vindication.

"At least I was able to prove that I was right from the very beginning," he told the INQUIRER.

Singson said Estrada's fate should teach the public valuable lessons in choosing its leaders.

"He deserved to be charged. It proves that the law applies to all," Singson said in Filipino.

He said Estrada's case should warn future leaders against looting government coffers.

"It's good that Erap was charged, so graft and corruption in our country would be stopped once and for all," he said. "For the first time, we have a president who has been charged. Our country is the only one that does not punish its leaders who have done wrong."

He added: "I'm happy that I was able to prove I was right. Millions voted for Erap, and now they know they have made a mistake." *With a report from Christian V. Esguerra*

Loi, Miriam . . .

(From page A1)

Estrada and his party of five left at 3:15 p.m. on a chartered aircraft, registered as RPC-1911, amid a tight watch over his movements at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) and other airports and sea ports around the country.

High alert

Shortly after the high court released its ruling, airport general manager Edgardo Manda ordered the security forces at the Naia to be on high alert against any attempt by the former President to leave the country.

"He appeared sad and looked old," said a member of the Airport Police Department, one of three policemen who monitored the departure of Estrada's five-seat Falcon DA-10 plane from the old Manila Domestic Airport.

But the former first lady said the Supreme Court's final ruling and the criminal charges filed against her, her husband and her son did not bother her.

Ejercito said the high court's ruling did not surprise her.

"What can you expect from the Supreme Court nowadays? But the people will be the final judge," she said in Filipino.

She said the decision would not affect her campaign. "The people say that they love Erap whether he is guilty or not because he is always persecuted," she said.

But some senatorial candidates, who are allies of the former President, began to distance themselves from the Estrada issue.

"It's campaign as usual. We're not bothered by this case," reelectionist Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile said.

Focus on issues

Enrile said he would focus his campaign on "national issues" instead of Estrada's fate.

But he said it would depend on the public's reaction. "We'll find out first what happens," he said.

In a recent opposition sortie in Bicol, Enrile dropped his usual tirade against People Power II.

Like Enrile, former Press Secretary Ricardo "Dong" Puno dropped his usual attacks on what he called the "lack of due process" in Estrada's impeachment trial.

Senatorial candidate Orlando Mercado, a former defense secretary, expressed the hope that the Supreme Court's final ruling would shift the focus of the campaign from Estrada.

"It is time the candidates focussed their attention on gut issues such as poverty, joblessness, prices, criminality," Mercado said in a statement yesterday.

Santiago said the most that the administration could do was to keep Estrada under house arrest.

"If he is jailed, that might spark civil unrest and maybe even a long and bitter civil war," she said in a statement.

Many Visayan leaders in the forefront of the anti-Estrada protest actions did not agree with Santiago's position.

"I don't think Estrada will gain the sympathy of the Filipinos with the filing of the charges. The silent majority will join the bandwagon calling for the prosecution of Estrada," said Rady Diola, moderator of Hagit Bisdak, a Cebu-based watchdog, which was formed by Catholic priests and Church-based groups to sustain the gains of People Power II.

Arrest Estrada

Lawyer Gabriel Ingles, spokesperson of Barug Sugbo, a multi-sectoral movement in Cebu which was in the forefront of the anti-Estrada protest in the province, said Estrada should be arrested.

"He must be detained at the Sandiganbayan detention cell," said Cebu City Councilor Edgardo Labella.

Ormoc City Mayor Eufrocino Codilla Sr. said Estrada should be jailed immediately. "I have nothing good to say about that man. The jail is now the place for him," he said.

For administration senatorial candidate Joker Arroyo, the Supreme Court decision "is the beginning and the end of Erap."

Former Internal Revenue Commissioner Liwayway Vinzons-Chato, another administration senatorial candidate, said the Supreme Court's decision sent a powerful signal to those in power.

"This proves that People Power II was legitimate. Those who were called the silent majority will now believe in People Power II," administration senatorial candidate Francis Pangilinan said. *With reports from Martin Marfil in Manila; and Nagiel B. Banacia, Jhunnex Napallacan, Diosa Labiste, Carla Gomez and Felix Codilla, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Who will arrest Estrada?

(From page A1)

it's part of the job, so I will do it," he said.

Cruz has worked alongside San Juan Mayor Jinggoy Estrada, one of the disgraced leader's sons, for more than three years.

"As you know, President Estrada is well respected by the people of San Juan. We are very proud of him. But If the court issues an arrest warrant against (him), then I won't have any choice but to follow it," Cruz said.

Bayan Muna deputy director Robert de Castro said President Macapagal-Arroyo "should instruct her men to speed up the prosecution and arrest of Estrada" and "end this roller coaster ride."

If Ms Macapagal fails to do this, the people will invoke their constitutional right to arrest him, De Castro said.

He added: "This is the most logical move the people can make in the face of the government's lack of political will to prosecute, arrest and punish the deposed leader."

In a separate statement, Rodolfo Sambajon, national chair of Pamalakaya, said it would support the "people's arrest" of Estrada if the government engaged in secret negotiations with the Estrada camp.

Security

Mendoza told the INQUIRER that as a former President, Estrada would be secured from anyone bent on harming him.

"We will never know, but there might be some people who would want to harm him or make his arrest difficult," Mendoza said.

Asked what would be done if Estrada resisted arrest, Mendoza said this was the reason for the "muscle" to be tapped by the sheriff.

He said his presence during the arrest was to ensure that the "rights of the accused" would be properly observed.

Cruz said he did not think Estrada would resist arrest.

"He has repeatedly said in his public appearances that he is willing to face the charges against him. This is even what he probably wants because this will give him the chance to prove himself innocent," Cruz said.

According to Mendoza, authorities will have to handle the arrest properly so as not to court public anger.

Citing the results of a recent survey, he said only 36 percent of 1,200 Filipinos interviewed wanted Estrada arrested. He said at least 70 percent wanted Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson arrested instead.

Singson, a former drinking and gambling buddy of Estrada's, had accused him of pocketing hundreds of millions of pesos in "jueteng" money and tobacco tax kickbacks.

His exposé eventually led to Estrada's ouster.

Mendoza said that since the arrest of an ex-President was unprecedented in Philippine history, authorities studied the cases of such deposed leaders as Slobodan Milosevic of Yugoslavia, Suharto of Indonesia, and Alberto Fujimori of Peru—all also accused of corruption and plunder.

Milosevic had resisted arrest and declared that he would fight to the death before surrendering to authorities. But negotiations resulted in his peaceful arrest.

Suharto was held under house arrest while Fujimori escaped from Peru to Japan.

No escape

Mendoza said Estrada's escape or self-exile was out of the question.

"Mr. Estrada will be tried here for plunder, and, if found guilty, will be made to serve his sentence here," Mendoza said.

He said that the former President's movements were being "monitored," and that "there is no way he can run away from the law."

Col. Victor Corpus, chief of the Intelligence Service of the AFP, also said there would be no escape for Estrada.

"We are tailing him wherever he goes. So any escape try will surely be foiled," Corpus told defense reporters in a phone interview. "If anyone tries to assist him, (this person) will also be prevented from doing so."

Corpus also said parties bent on destabilizing the Macapagal administration would not succeed.

Alluding to Estrada supporters, Corpus said: "They have the money, but we doubt whether they would be able to muster enough followers.

"But if they make any attempt, we're always on the alert."

Double alert

Immigration Commissioner Andrea Domingo yesterday ordered a 24-hour double alert for immigration personnel at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport and 35 other ports in the country.

Domingo said she had also requested the detail of 20 Marines at the Zamboanga Port to help immigration agents guarding the so-called "southern backdoor."

Estrada and 23 of his relatives and associates are on the hold-departure list of the Bureau of Immigration.

The 23 include former first lady Luisa Ejercito and her son Jinggoy, Estrada brother-in-law Raul de Guzman, former Budget Secretary Benjamin Diokno, former Executive Secretary Ronaldo Zamora and his brother, banker Manuel Zamora, former legislative liaison officer Jaime Policarpio, Estrada lawyer Edward Serapio, and Charlie "Atong" Ang.

Domingo said she had been told by an informant of "unusual movements" at the Davao International Airport at 11 a.m. yesterday.

When she had the tip verified, it turned out that immigration agents had noticed the heavy presence of vehicles at the airport.

She said Jinggoy Estrada had been in Davao City for the past two days, arranging a campaign rally of the Puwersa ng Masa senatorial candidates.

Domingo said the former President was confirmed to have taken a domestic flight to Roxas City at around 3 p.m. He was said to have been accompanied by four foreign journalists. *Reports from Christine Herrera, Agnes Donato, Carlito Pablo, Gerald G. Lacuarta and Andrea Trinidad-Echavez*

'Kabayan' staff . . .

(From page A1)

Castro's staff tried to give this correspondent an envelope containing money.

The correspondent was on his way out of the room when one of De Castro's staff members caught up with him and asked, "What media organization are you with, sir?"

Told the answer, he smiled, offered a white envelope and said: "*Ipinabibigay po sa inyo ni Kabayang Noli.*"

Other members of the media at the press conference said that similar envelopes contained P300 each.

The INQUIRER politely turned down the offer, but the staff member insisted, saying, "*Para po talaga sa inyo ito,* sir." Again, he was turned down.

De Castro is apparently not the only national candidate wooing the media with gifts of cash. A local reporter told the INQUIRER that People Power Coalition senatorial candidate Manuel Villar gave out envelopes containing P500 at another function in South Cotabato.

The INQUIRER tried to get De Castro's side but a staffer at his campaign headquarters said he was campaigning in Nueva Ecija and could not be reached.

Drug suspect dares accuser to identify him in lineup

(From page A1)

yesterday, welcomed the move but pointed out that he had already filed a vacation leave a day earlier.

"I filed a leave of absence in order to erase any doubts that I am influencing the investigation," he said.

Supt. Alberto Mercado, assistant provincial director, will temporarily take over Alejandrino's post.

Alcala, Punzalan, Talaga and Alejandrino have all denied Perpiñan's accusations.

"How can he claim that he is my confidential associate, when he does not even know my real name? I was born Cerilo Alcala, not Atilano," Alcala said in the family's ancestral house in Barangay Cotta.

"I haven't even seen his shadow," he said.

Alcala said the government investigators could have all the witnesses they wanted as long as he was not doing anything wrong.

Coffee on credit

"The lies of Perpiñan would be exposed because I'm dead sure he could not pinpoint me as the drug lord that he was talking about," he told the INQUIRER as he sipped black coffee, which he bought on credit.

"I added this item, including this stick of Philip Morris, to my growing list of debt in the neighborhood store," Alcala said.

"Is this the kind of life of a very influential drug lord?" he said.

Alcala disclosed that a bank had foreclosed on the mortgage on his house in PNB Homes in the outskirts of the city because of his arrears.

He politely declined to have his picture taken because of the challenge that he was offering to Perpiñan.

"Besides, I don't have associates and confidants. I'm alone. I even go to the *poblacion* all alone riding in a jeep. And even when I still had my rundown car, I did not employ a driver. I may not afford the salary," Alcala said.

He described Perpiñan as crazy.

Alcala said he did not even know the location of the Aristocrat, the restaurant where he supposedly met Punzalan, Talaga and Alejandrino, his alleged protectors in the illegal drug trade.

"I don't know how can I get to Aristocrat, much more Binondo. Besides, who is Athel Alcala to call for a meeting with these people? I simply can't believe it," Alcala said.

"If they think I'm hiding because of the reports, they are wrong. I'm always here. Sometimes, I join the campaign of my brother," he said.

His elder brother is Barangay Cotta village chief Vicente "Kulit" Alcala, who is running for a seat in the provincial board.

Alcala's brother, Vicente, who later joined the interview, said, "If Perpiñan insists that he is a confidant of my brother, why don't I know him?"

He said Athel had problems because he used to be a drug pusher. "But definitely he is not a drug lord as claimed by Perpiñan."

Vicente said the accusations against his brother were "brazen lies."

Alcala appeared unperturbed by reports that he was a drug trafficker. He was wearing a loose yellow T-shirt and faded blue jeans with a leather sandal.

He said his "past dealings" were over.

Rebuilding shattered life

"What I'm doing now is rebuilding my shattered life. As a matter of fact, when the INQUIRER story reached me, I went to your house (PDI correspondent's house—Ed.) to air my side. But you were not around," he told the INQUIRER.

The Alcalas are well known throughout the province.

Their father, board member Hermilando "Ka Eming" Alcala, has served the city and provincial governments in various capacities. He was once a vice governor.

For his part, Alejandrino said he would do anything to prove his innocence. "This report has caused irreparable damage to my family and friends, mostly to the people of the province," he said.

Alejandrino's wife Lolly said it was very hard for a police officer to be suspected of involvement in illegal drug activities.

"Our children, who are all in Manila, called up (Monday) and were crying about the report they heard from the radio," she said.

"This is very painful for all of us. This is unfair. They should ask for the truth first before publishing the report," she said.

In Manila, "running" priest Robert Reyes asked Punzalan to "stop doing an Erap and just answer the accusations."

Reyes said Punzalan should respond point-by-point to allegations that he was coddling drug traffickers and not use his being a family man to prove his innocence.

Reyes likened Punzalan's blanket denials to that of deposed President Joseph Estrada, who claimed that he did not receive a single centavo from "jueteng" operators.

"He should answer the charges directly and not make statements about his family and children to show his innocence. That's very shallow," Reyes said.

The priest was reacting to Punzalan's statement that he could not allow himself to be involved in drug trafficking because doing so would be tantamount to killing his five children. *With a report from Christian V. Esguerra*

'Party-list system . . .

(From page A1)

sectoral groups to the registration by the Commission on Elections (Comelec) of party-list groups whose nominees are identified with Estrada or his allies, scions of traditional politicians and retired generals.

"What marginalized sector is actor Richard Gomez of MAD representing? Is he a drug addict?" scoffed Alex Aguilar, spokesperson of the party-list All Trade Union Congress (ATUCP). Gomez is a nominee of Mamamayan Ayaw sa Droga or MAD.

"And don't tell us drug addicts are a marginalized sector of society," Aguilar said.

Akbayan Rep. Etta Rosales blamed the Comelec for the mockery of the party-list system.

Rosales said based on the list of nominees, 16 of the 162 accredited party-list groups have links to the previous administration.

"The Comelec must be held responsible for its inaction and omission for allowing the virus of lumpen and big money politics to worm its way and intrude into the party-list space allotted for the voiceless and marginalized," said Rosales, author of a stalled House bill seeking to amend the party-list law.

Jose Balbuena, chief of the Comelec legal department which receives the applications and nominations, said the list of nominees submitted by 162 party-list groups shall no longer be the subject of hearings since these groups had already been duly registered.

When asked if traditional politicians were allowed to represent party-list groups in the House of Representatives, Balbuena replied, "What traditional politicians? How am I supposed to know if these are traditional politicians?" Balbuena said.

A lawyer at the law department admitted that the party-list law, Republic Act 7941, does not prevent former government officials, traditional politicians or their relatives and movie personalities from being nominated under the party-list system.

Qualifications

Under the law, the minimum qualifications for a party-list nominee include Filipino citizenship, registration as a voter, one-year residency in the country, literacy, membership in the party or group for at least 90 days, and age of at least 25 years.

Youth sector representatives must not be older than 30 years.

The only "limitations" set by the law on party-list nominations are that a person may be nominated by one party only, and that the nominees shall not include any candidate in the same elections or anybody who ran but lost in the immediate past elections.

But Rosales said what was being violated was the "spirit and context of the party-list system and its principle of proportional representation."

"In essence, these harbingers of decadent politics have declared open war on the hapless, marginalized and underrepresented citizens who are trying to make a bid for some space in House representation," Rosales said.

Wilson Fortaleza, president of the Sanlakas, said the party-list election was now being used as "backdoor entry" by traditional politicians to maintain and regain their clout.

Under the party-list system, a party or group needed only to garner at least 2 percent of the total number of votes cast for the party-list to be able to sit its No. 1 nominee. If it wins 4 percent, it will be able to sit No. 1 and No. 2; if 6 percent, it will be able to sit the first three. One party is entitled to a maximum of three seats.

"These politicians fear to openly seek votes for public office because of their tarnished records or association with the despised regime of Estrada, so they are forced to anonymously enter Congress through the party-list system," Fortaleza said.

"The party-list (system) has gone to the dogs," said Fortaleza, whose group founded by slain labor leader Filemon Lagman, will participate for the first time in the party-list elections

Fortaleza cited the nominations of former Estrada flagships secretary Roberto Aventajado of the Bagong Bayani Organization; Estrada legal counsel Edward Serapio of the Sports and Health Development Foundation; former Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno of the Philippine Local Autonomy Movement; Chief Supt. Romeo Acop of Bantay Bayan; Chief Supt. Jewel Canson of MAD; and former Estrada special assistant for the Visayas Marcelo Fernan Jr. of Alay sa Bayan para sa Kalayaan at Demokrasya (Abakada); and Ronald Jay Lacson, son of former police chief and senatorial candidate Panfilo Lacson, of the Kabataan ng Masang Pilipino (Kampil), a group organized by Jose Victor Ejercito.

"These are not marginalized groups, but party-list groups of Estrada cronies and political patrons who want to bring back the dark days of the Estrada regime," said Bayan Muna president Satur Ocampo, who is his party's No. 1 nominee for Congress.

Bayan Muna warned the public against the so-called dubious party-list groups and said that its campaign headquarters had been funded by Estrada's ill-gotten billions.

"He want to reverse People Power II by building a huge political clout in Congress," added the Bayan Muna statement.

"Scandalous," on the other hand, was how the party-list group ATUCO described the known Estrada allies, scions of political families and retired generals to become congressmen through the party-list system.

"The scam is only the latest of the many attempts to prostitute the party-list system," said Alex Aguilar, ATUCP spokesperson.

De-list, de-louse

Aguilar said the ATUCP was preparing to file a petition with the Supreme Court to "de-list and de-louse the party-list system of well-heeled, obviously popular, well-entrenched and dubious organizations masquerading as marginalized and underrepresented."

Aguilar said the party-list system of representation, which was introduced in the 1998 elections, was supposed to provide the opportunity for marginalized and underrepresented sectors obtain possible representation in the House of Representatives.

Aguilar said the nominees in the first party-list elections in 1998 where the ATUCP took part were not as prominent and well-placed as those nominated now.

He said that some of the present nominees could even run in the congressional districts with all their money and political connections.

The Constitution identifies eight sectors: labor, peasants, fisherfolk, urban poor, indigenous cultural communities, disabled, youth and women. RA 7941, the party-list law, added four more sectors: elderly, veterans, overseas workers and professionals. *With a report from Andrea T.Echavez*

Troops close in on Abu Sayyaf as deadline nears

GOVERNMENT troops closed in on suspected hideouts of the Abu Sayyaf yesterday, one day before the extremist group threatened to decapitate their American hostage and present his head as a gift to President Macapagal-Arroyo on her birthday today, military officials said.

Armed Forces of the Philippines chief of staff Diomedio Villanueva said limited advances started Wednesday in the first wave of assaults ordered by the President to "annihilate" the rebels and rescue Jeffrey Schilling, a US citizen held hostage since August last year, the Associated Press reported.

"Military operations have started in Sulu and Basilan provinces. This is guerrilla warfare and government forces are now pursuing the terrorists," Villanueva said.

Executive Secretary Renato de Villa, himself a former AFP chief of staff, told a radio interviewer yesterday the government would press ahead with its attack on the Abu Sayyaf.

"We are not going to change our policy of not negotiating with terrorists," he said.

Villanueva did not say how many troops were involved in the operation but regional army spokesman Maj. Johnny Macanas said 900 elite Scout Rangers were ready to reinforce the infantry when their transport planes were grounded in Zamboanga City due to heavy rains.

Attack helicopters were also deploying to back the advancing troops, Macanas said.

There were no immediate reports of clashes or casualties Wednesday.

"They did it before, they could do it again," said

Brig. Gen. Jaime Canatoy, chief of the AFP Civil Relations Service, who recalled that the rebels had made good their threat to behead two male teachers they were holding hostage in Basilan as a birthday present to then President Joseph Estrada on April 19 last year.

"They might do it because they did it before during the time of Estrada," Canatoy said.

President Macapagal had ordered the AFP to pursue and "annihilate" the Abu Sayyaf after the group renewed their threat to harm the American.

The group is also holding Roland Ullah, a Filipino diving instructor whom they abducted last April from the Malaysian island resort of Sipadan.

A former spokesperson of the Moro National Liberation Front, however, warned the Macapagal administration that its "all-out war" against the Abu Sayyaf would almost ensure the Schilling's beheading.

Abet Iribani said Ms Macapagal's order to "pursue and annihilate" the Abu Sayyaf threatened not only the terrorist group but also villagers living near the group's hideouts.

He said the President should not have used the words "annihilate" and "all-out war" because these have strong negative implications to civilians whose support the military needs.

"Use the right words to describe what you will undertake," Iribani said, adding "military action" would have sufficed to describe the government's plan. *Carlito Pablo and Blanche S. Rivera, with AP and AFP reports*

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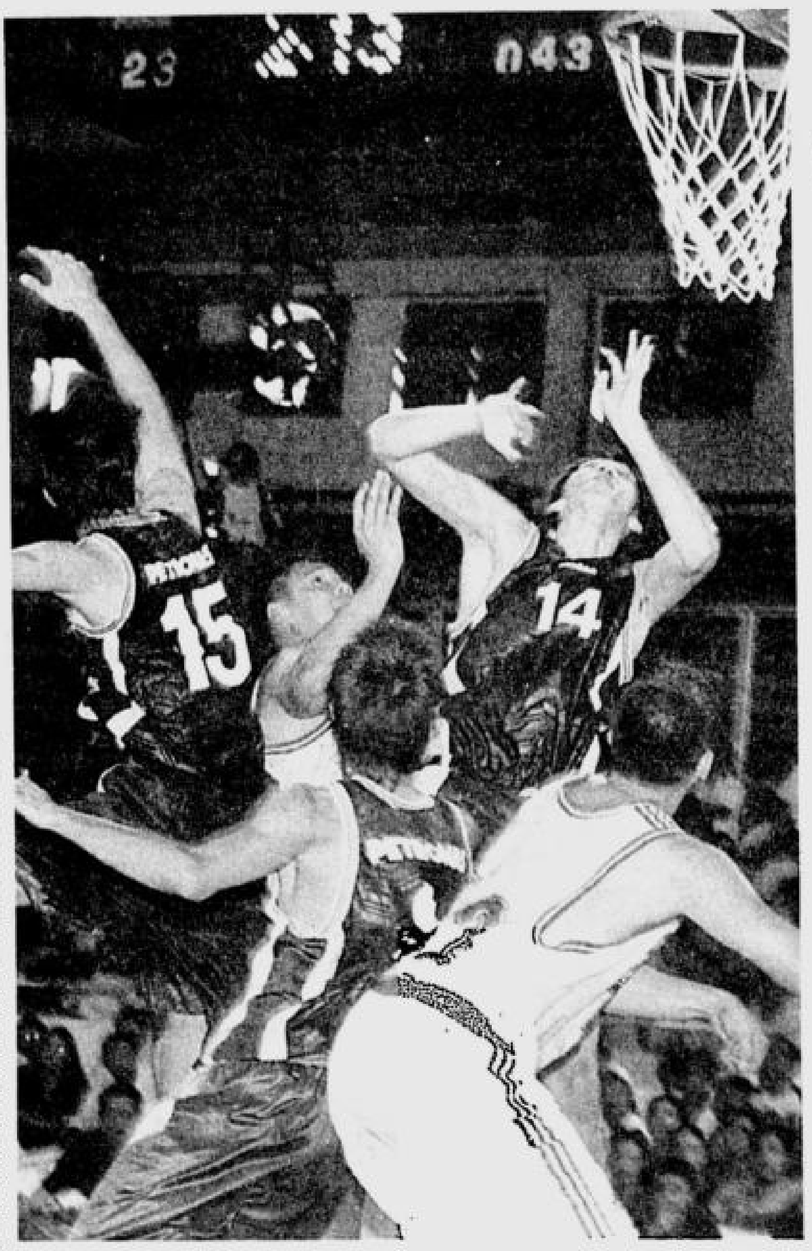
Jun B, Bong kiss and make up



FILIPINOS Homer Se (partly hidden) and John Ferriols (right) contest the rebound with Malaysians' Chang Chin Ho (15), Koh Way Tek (14) and Ong Hung Thiam during their Seaba men's championship game yesterday. The Philippines won, 91-43. JESS YUSON

GAMES TOMORROW
(Araneta Coliseum)
5:15 p.m. – Purefoods vs Shell
6:30 p.m. – Pop vs Ginebra

BONG Tan, who hit the headlines last week for his critical remarks against the Philippine Basketball Association, said yesterday that he had no intention of hurting the league when he unleashed his outburst.

He said he merely wanted to "air my sentiments" against what he said were the league's twin tendency to favor San Miguel Beer and be hostile against Tanduay.

LOWELL Briones intercepted a crucial inbound before making two free throws late in overtime as Batang Red Bull edged Sta. Lucia Realty, 87-84, last night in the PBA All-Filipino Cup at Philsports.

Tanduay Gold kept its quarterfinals hope alive following a 92-79 victory over San Miguel Beer in the second game. The Rhummasters upped their record to 5-8, while the Beermen dropped to 8-5.

During the Tanduay Gold team owner's outburst last week, he particularly riled at what he said was biased officiating against his team.

Tan and PBA Commissioner Jun Bernardino both emerged from the one-hour, closed-door meeting looking happy, though.

"I'm part of the PBA family and I'm always ready to follow the rules," said Tan.

He reiterated he would not leave the PBA. He said it was all done "in the heat of emotion" when he said he might pull out Tanduay from the league.

Bernardino summoned Tan after Tan was slapped a technical in the final minute against Pop Cola last week. Pop won that game.

The technical came after Tan had vehemently protested the ejection of Tanduay player Jeffrey Cariaso.

Tan also approached game officials after the game at midcourt instead of proceeding directly to the dugout as called for by the rules.

Explaining his outbursts before sportswriters days after the game, he said, "It was just days after that loss. *Alam mo naman* we all want to win and sometimes, our emotions get in the way. But all is well now and I am just looking forward to a successful and fruitful participation of my team in the years to come."

Tan had a pointed answer in reaction to Bernardino's explanation when the issue of PBA officiating was brought up.

"I'm satisfied with his explanation but not 100 percent satisfied," he said. "I hope that in the future, things will get better."

Tan was a basketball referee when he was taking up both his engineering and math degrees at the University of California-Davis in the US.

Tan said that Bernardino had assured him about everybody getting equal treatment from the Commissioner's office.

He said they didn't talk about alleged charges that Tanduay had violated salary cap regulations.

When asked about it, Bernardino refused to discuss the matter.

Tan said he was aware of possible fines to be imposed on him. He said he would gladly abide by whatever decision Bernardino would arrive at in accordance with the league's by-laws.

The fact that Mr. Bong Tan appeared before the Commissioner today is a sign in itself that he wants to be a member of good standing in this league," said Bernardino.

Yenko at Scoop

ASIA'S premiere professional cage league will be at the main spotlight as Philippine Basketball Association chairman Ignacio Yenko appears as main guest tomorrow in the weekly Sports Communicators Organization of the Philippines (SCOOP) forum at the Kamayan West Avenue.

COMPLETE NBA RESULTS

Boston 82, Miami 77; Charlotte 103, New Jersey 88; New York 94, Orlando 82; Indiana 85, Phoenix 81; Toronto 100, Philadelphia 85; LA Lakers 96, Utah 88; Detroit 110, Chicago 83; Dallas 109, Houston 97; San Antonio 107, Seattle 89; Denver 94, Portland 92; Milwaukee 107, Sacramento 101

Torre grabs share of lead in RP Open

GRANDMASTER Eugene Torre came through with a vintage performance to outwit Fide Master Jesse Noel Sales yesterday and gain a share of the lead after Round 3 of the finals of the National chess Open chess championships at the Ramon Magsaysay Hall of the SSS building in Quezon City.

Torre, playing black, beat Sales in 49 moves of a Nimzo-Indian Defense to boost his tally to 2.5 points and wheel into a tie with International Master candidate Richard Bitoon, who earlier settled for a quick draw with friend National Master Jayson Gonzales in 16 moves of a Guioco-Piano Opening.

Grandmasters Bong Villamor and Joey Antonio also prevailed over their separate rivals to move into a four-way tie for second place with International Master Chito Garma and Gonzales, all with two points each.

Villamor forced National Master Emmanuel Senador into time forfeit after 39 moves of Reti Opening while Antonio dumped National Master Allan Sayson in 63 moves of Catalan Defense.

Garma bounced back from his second-round loss to Gonzales by outplaying National Master Darwin Laylo in 46 moves of a center Counter Game.

"Sales made some good moves in the middle game but I think I was ahead most of the time and in control," said Torre following his emphatic victory.

"I was so focused on my mating chances that I made a mistake of playing Na7 on my final move. Maybe it was because I was time-pressured," said the 33-year-old Sales who was playing Torre for the first time.

International Master Beverly Mendoza and National Master Sheerie Joy Lomibao posted contrasing wins over separate foes to maintain tied on top in the women's division with three points apiece.

Mendoza struggled past fellow IM Christine Rose Mariano in 73 moves of a King's Indian Samitsch Variation while Lomibao subdued Minda Flores in 37 moves of a Catalan encounter.

Daisy Rivera was in solo second place with two points after splitting her match with Joann Toledo in 64 moves of a Sicilian Defense.

Mariano slipped to third place with Toledo and Joya Rusela, who beat Jennifer Cruz in 60 moves of a Sicilian, 1ith 1.5 points apiece.

Bauzon sets Pangasinan clinics

YOUNG cagers in Pangasinan and Bicol will be treated to an Olympian brand of caging with the launching of the Orly Bauzon Basketball Camp (OBBC) at the Jollibee Junction, Dagupan City.

Two-time RP-Olympic Cage, MICAA and PBA superstar Orly Bauzon will share his experience and know-how through scientific approach in molding young cagers to national, international and Olympic caliber.

In the launch attended by local and national media practitioners, Bauzon said that it is his dream to see Pangasinenses and Bicolanos play in international events particularly the Olympics someday.

Seven Pangasinan towns and three cities will play host in the OBBC—Lingayen, Bugallon, Umingan, Rosales, Sual, Villasis, San Fabian and the cities of Dagupan, San Carlos and Urdaneta. The clinics will be from April 16 to June 2.

"I am a member of the RP-Olympic Basketball Team that played in the 1968 Mexico Games after regaining the Asian Crown in the 1967 Asian basketball Confederation Championships in Seoul, Korea," the Toyota-PBA superstar disclosed.

The OBBC, which is sponsored by Burlington Sock, will open its Bicol Camp in Sta. Elena, Camarines Norte, on May 7, ending on May 12.

Welcoat vs Hapee today

GAMES TODAY Makati Coliseum
3:30 p.m.—Ateneo-Pioneer vs Ana
5:30 p.m.—Hapee vs Welcoat

DEFENDING champion Welcoat Paints tries to recover its old sting today when it collides with Hapee Toothpaste in the PBL Chairman's Cup at the Makati Coliseum.

They collide at 5:30 p.m.

"We're struggling but we're okay," Welcoat coach Junel Baculi said. "We can bounce back and, hopefully, things will change for the better. I guess we're still affected losing the Challenge Cup to Shark."

Welcoat is 0-2 in the series being dominated by Shark (3-0).

In the 3:30 opener, Ateneo-Pioneer battles Ana.

RP routs Malaysia, 91-43, sweeps elims

Team Standings

Group A	W	L	Group B	W	L
*Philippines	3	0	*Thailand	1	0
*Singapore	1	1	*Indonesia	1	0
Malaysia	1	2	Brunei	0	2
Vietnam	0	2	*Semifinalists		

Games Today
1:30 p.m.—Vietnam vs Singapore (Group A)
3:30 p.m.—Indonesia vs Thailand (Group B)

BY ROY LUARCA

AFTER viewing the tape of the Philippine Team's 91-43 rout of Malaysia yesterday, national coach Boyzie Zamar came out of his room with mixed feelings.

He was glad with the intensity his players have displayed, but was worried with their tendency to be flashy and individualistic at times.

"It's really hard to have 12 superstars in my team," he said. "Everybody tends to play one-on-one when we're way ahead. This team is laden with talent, but teamwork is still essential if we are to succeed."

Zamar, however, was relieved that the RP Team, composed of MBA stalwarts, has hurdled the elimination round of the 4th South East Asia Basketball Association men's championship with aplomb.

Their victory over the American-mentored Malaysians was the Filipinos' third straight in as many starts and gave them the Group A top spot in the crossover semifinals, which start tomorrow.

"There are many things that need to be done if we want to retain our crown. We can't afford to be complacent at this stage," said Zamar, noting that both the Thais and the Indons, the Group B qualifiers, are strong.

The tournament, which will determine the region's two representatives to the Asian Basketball Confederation championship, is sponsored by the Philippine Sports Commission, Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, Casino Filipino, Rain Forest Mineral Water, Absolute Distilled Water, YKL Color, Molten, Bestank, La Suerte Telengtan Bros. and Baker's Fair.

The scores:

PHILIPPINES 91—Adducul 15, Padilla 12, Dela Rosa 11, Calaguio 11, Martin 8, Rodriguez 8, Ferriols 8, Se 6, Mendiola 5, Echavez 4, Laure 3, Victolero 0.

MALAYSIA 43—Mulhearn 8, Salyascelan 7, Ho 6, Lay 5, Yong 4, Chuan 4, Kean 4, Thiam 2, Tek 2, Tingin 1, Seng 0, Hoong 0.

Halftime: 51-26.

Last RP jr tennis entry bows out

BY JUNE NAVARRO

TAIPEI'S Su-wei Hsieh dumped Czarina Mae Arevalo, 6-2,6-3, yesterday to wipe out the local bets in the second round of the 12th Mitsubishi Lancer International Junior Tennis Championships at the Rizal Memorial Coliseum.

Ranked 28th in the world, the second-ranked Hsieh frolicked against the Filipina as she set up a quarterfinals duel with Thailand's Pichaya Laosirichon.

Prior to her elimination, the 18-year-old Arevalo was the country's last hope following the early exits of Filipino bets in the boys and girls division.

"I had a good start and good thing I sustained it until the last set," said Hsieh.

Arevalo, ranked 129th worldwide, couldn't get the right shots at the start, a deficiency Hsieh exploited by attacking the net more often and returning the ball with power and precision.

Top seeded Angelique Widjaja toyed with Thailands Montinee Tang Pong, 6-2, 6-1, in another tussle. Widjaja collides with Australia's Adriana Szili in the quarters. Szili dealt Megha Vakaria of Indonesia a 6-1, 6-3 whipping.

In the boys division, top seeded Jonathan Chu of the United States scrambled past Slovakias Jan Stancik, 5-7, 6-4, 6-3, to arrange a confrontation with Pawei Dilaj of Poland in the quarters today.

Dilaj trimmed Eko Kurniawan of Indonesia, 6-4, 6-3, in the second round of the event participated in by 56 foreigners.

Other matches saw Clinton Letcher of Australia shade Indonesia's Sunil Kumar Sipaeya, 7-5, 6-4, Slovenia's Luka Gregorc beat Jason Zimmerman of the USA, 6-2, 7-6 (5) and Hong Kong's Tung Yu Hiu defeat Anuwat Dalodom of Thailand, 3-6, 6-0, 6-3.

Gregorc faces Yu Hui while Letcher tangles with USA's Scott Oudsema, a 6-4, 1-0 (ret.) winner over Tara Tanthsuwanalert of Thailand.

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ASPEN/BOBCATS

Teopaco paces Sagupaan derby

LONG shots try to extend their luck as the "9th Ucap/ Sagupaan Winning line-Starwars Sagupaan 6-Cock derby" enters its championship round beginning at 7 p.m. today at the Mandaluyong Coliseum.

Derby hosts are Patrick Antonio and Tony Litonjua with Sagupaan Super Feeds and Lakpue Drug Inc. as sponsors.

Giant-killer Esting Teopaco of the famed EGT Stinger entry, fresh from ruling the 8th Ucap Derby last week, scored two victories in last Tuesday's eliminations.

Other two-pointers were Vic Yu (Mandaluyong Col. International 9-Cock May 29 and King Boxer), Boy de Roca, Danny Ty and Ben Chan (BL BC Showdown), Eric dela Rosa and Louie Cua (LCC GP), Jet Fernando and Ramon Mencenares (San Pedro GP Eagle), Pol Estrellado, (Sagupaan PB San Pablo) and lawyer Ram Lopez (Altuz I).

To follow immediately on April 7 is another big time cockfest billed as "Capitan 5-Cock Derby," hosted by John Capinpin and James Uy.

The hosts are expecting at least 20 entries equivalent to 50 fights.

The next Ucap–supported event (San Pedro GP Eagle 6-Cock derby), which will come after the Lenten season–is on April 17 and 19 to be hosted by Jet Fernando, Ramon Mencenares and Ting Ariosa.

Torres solo cockfest champ

LITTLE-KNOWN Metro Manila cocker Mon Torres emerged as the solo champion in Pasay City Cockpit's special 4-cock event held March 30.

Torres' bet, RPT Gem Aqui June 8 Pasay, posted four straight en route to victory.

He received a trophy from Thunderbird Power Feeds.

Meanwhile, at least 30 cockers and breeders will see action in a big 4-cock derby at PCC tomorrow.

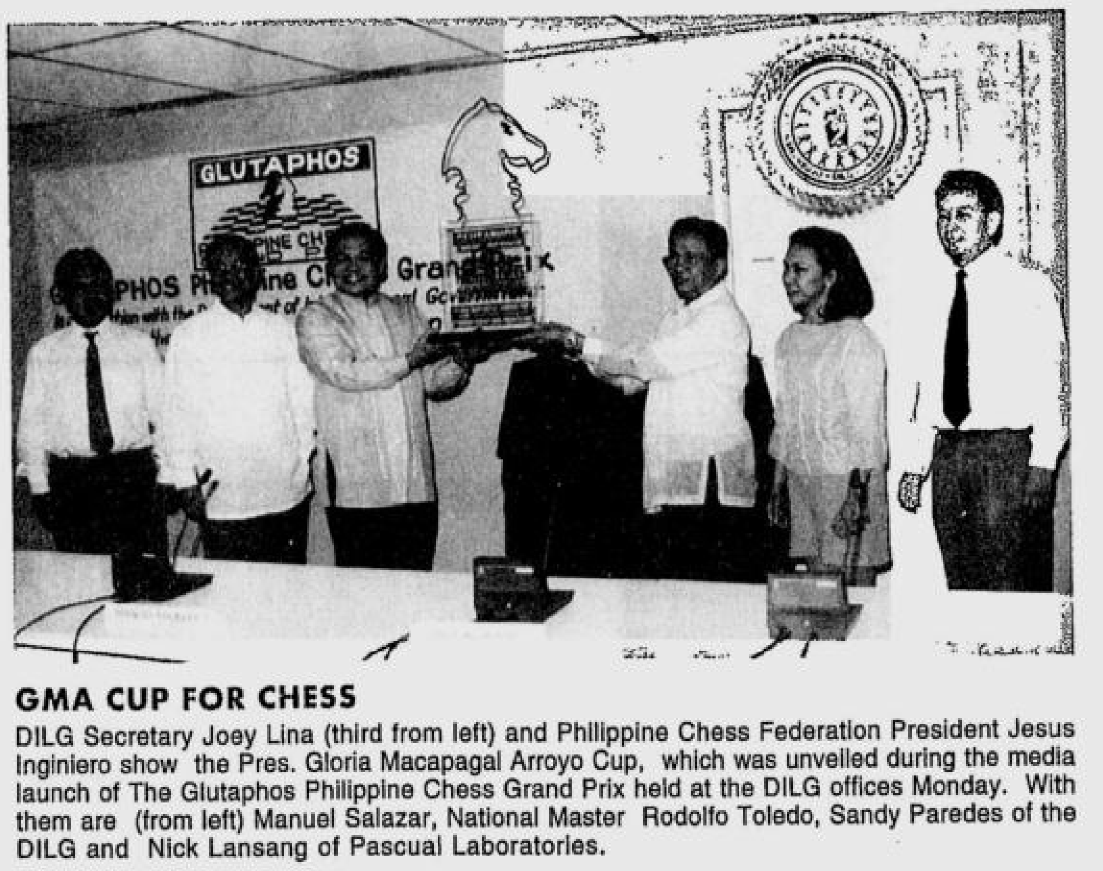
A whopping prize of P300,000 is at stake in this event hosted by partners Victor Median and Ferdie Lim. Entry fee is P10,000.

The Sagupaan Super Feeds 5-Cock Derby is set on April 20. It will be hosted by *sabong* idol Patrick Antonio. For inquiries, call 843-1890 and 843-1746.

RACING TIPS

AT SANTA ANA
BY MR. 999

Race 1—1. Glorious Riches 2. Sun Bride 3. Grand Prize 4. Maria Nevada 5. Golden State
Race 2—1. My Prayer 2. Brilliant Leader 3. Portal Dancer 4. Super Regent 5. Poblacion
Race 3—1. Speed Day 2. Flaming Bullet 3. Inner Wheeler 4. Solany Belle 5. Adam's Call
Race 4—1. Always Remember 2. Battle Tested 3. Maharani 4. Miss New York 5. Big Boss
Race 5—1. Pro Bono 2. Boy from Brazil 3. Cool Sound 4. Cristel Jay
Race 6—1. Mark's Treasure 2. Exchange Deal 3. Truthful Lady 4. Courage 5. Silver Gray
Race 7—1. En Carta 2. Diplomatic Bull 3. Aim and Fire 4. Big Bucks 5. Grande Ecole
Race 8—1. Ringer Kid 2. Royal Angel 3. The Painter 4. Walang Hanggan 5. Ever Green


GLUTAPHOS
GLUTAPHOS Philippine Chess Grand Prix

GMA CUP FOR CHESS

DILG Secretary Joey Lina (third from left) and Philippine Chess Federation President Jesus Inginiero show the Pres. Gloria Macapagal Arroyo Cup, which was unveiled during the media launch of The Glutaphos Philippine Chess Grand Prix held at the DILG offices Monday. With them are (from left) Manuel Salazar, National Master Rodolfo Toledo, Sandy Paredes of the DILG and Nick Lansang of Pascual Laboratories.

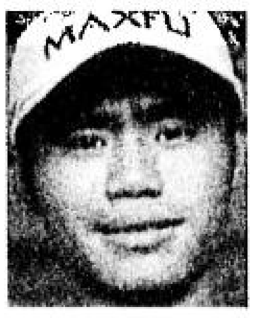
Hingis stalker convicted

MIAMI—A man who said he fell in love with tennis star Martina Hingis and followed her to tournaments around the world despite her pleas to stay away has been convicted of stalking. Dubravko Rajcevic, a 46-year-old Croatian-born naval architect from Australia, was found guilty Tuesday of stalking and three counts of trespassing at the 2000 Ericsson Open near Miami. He faces up to four years in prison. *AP*

SPORTS

AL S. MENDOZA, Editor ▪ EDWIN M. VILLANUEVA, Assistant Editor

Rosales to play at CAP-Forest Hills


ROSALES

SINFUEGO

LASCUNA

ANTIPOLO –Ignoring medical advice not to play, Gerald Rosales will tee off today in the P700,000-College Assurance Plan-Forest Hills Golf Classic here.

Rosales, the best performing RP bet in the Asian Tour, missed the Ericsson-Smart Zed Sherwood Hills Classic two weeks ago due to a wrist injury.

The reigning Philippine Open champion said his wrist had completely healed.

Rosales' foes include Cassius Casas, Rodrigo Cuello, Danny Zarate, Rick Gibson and the winners of the last two legs—Richard Sinfuego and Antonio Lascuna.

Lascuna is now the leading money winner of the tour presented by CAP, Camp John Hay Dev't Corp., Fil-Estate Group of Companies and Metro Rail Transit Corp. after rallying past Pactolerin and Casas to win at Sherwood Hills.

Sinfuego won at Camp John Hay after Rey Pagunsan topped the Tour opener at Southwoods. Pagunsan is in Japan campaigning.

Also teeing off today are the amateur invitees to the 36-hole pro-am where a luxurious 2001 Chevrolet Cassia put up by GM Automobiles Phils. through its president-GM Harold K.J. Coh is at stake as a prize for an ace on the 15th hole.

"This event will be won by the player who will hit his drives consistently and can keep his knees firm enough for four days," said Philippine Tour chair Bob Sobrepeña. "Scoring has been very impressive for the past three legs, which just goes to show that our pros are working on their games hard enough to be able to win."

The Classic will be the first major professional event to be held at Forest Hills, a par-71, 6,950-yard layout laden with ravines, bunkers and elevated greens.

The finishing hole of Forest Hills designed by the Golden Bear outfit of the legendary Jack Nicklaus is a rarity in the local golfing scene: a donut-shaped green with a sand trap in the middle.

SPORTS ON TV

COMPILED BY LORENZO MANGUIAT

GOLF: The Masters Official Films - 2000 at 7 a.m. (r – 12:30 p.m.) on Star Sports

PGA Bellsouth Classic Duluth, Final Round at 8 a.m. (r), Highlights at 11:30 p.m. on Star Sports

Augusta Masters 2001, Day One Preview tomorrow at 3:30 a.m. on Star Sports

Augusta Masters 2001, Day One tomorrow at 4 a.m. on Star Sports

BASKETBALL: 2001 NCAA Finals - Duke vs Arizona at 3 p.m. (r) on Star Sports

NBA – Portland Trailblazers vs Minnesota Timberwolves at 5:30 p.m. on IBC 13

BASEBALL: ESPN's Wednesday Night Baseball at 7 a.m. and 10 a.m. on ESPN

TENNIS: The Ericsson Open, Highlights at 1 p.m. (r) on ESPN

WRESTLING: WCW Nitro at 9:30 p.m. on Star Sports

SNOOKER: Premier Snooker League 2001 at 2 p.m. on ESPN

2001 Malta Grand Prix, Semifinal #1 at 5 p.m. (r) on ESPN

SOCCER: Western Union World Football at 7 p.m. on ESPN

Thai on the menu at Masters dinner

AUGUSTA, Georgia—Tiger Woods was content with cheeseburgers and milk shakes. Sandy Lyle wanted a native Scottish dish known as haggis. Sushi and fajitas were on Mark O'Meara's plate.

For Vijay Singh, chicken panang curry was the order of the day.

As defending Masters champion, Singh got to pick the menu for the champions dinner on Tuesday night. He called on close friends Charlie and Nan Niyomkul, who run the popular Tamarind Thai restaurant in Atlanta.

The couple put together a family-style menu, beginning with spring rolls and chicken satay for the appetizers, followed by scallop and shrimp coconut lemongrass soup.

For the main dish, chicken panang curry _ Singh's favorite _ was accompanied by baked sea bass with three-favor chili sauce, rack of lamb with yellow curry sauce and baked sea scallops with pepper garlic sauce.

For desert: lychee sorbee. Washing it all down: Singha beer, a native Thai beverage.

"It's a goooood menu," Singh said.

The Niyomkuls set up their own kitchen at Augusta National on Tuesday afternoon, with four friends assisting in the preparation. They also planned to take time explaining the exotic dishes to former champions who might be a bit skeptical about trying the spicy Asian cuisine.

"It's something new," Charlie Niyomkul said. "A lot of the players do like Thai food: Sandy Lyle, Ian Woosnam, Nick Faldo. For the older guys, we have set aside 45 minutes to educate those people. We'll just go around and talk to them, try to talk them into it. It's going to be some nice food." *AP*

Westwood skips Masters

AUGUSTA, Goergia—Lee Westwood, Europe's top golfer last season, withdrew from the Masters on Tuesday to be with his wife for the birth of their first child.

Laurae Westwood is expecting Saturday, when the third round is scheduled at Augusta National.

Lee Westwood has been saying for more than a month that he would probably skip the Masters to be with his wife.

"I am extremely disappointed to miss the Masters," the 27-year-old Englishman said in a statement. "Although I have delayed making a decision for as long as possible, I wanted to make sure I withdrew before the draw was made. However, all being well, I very much hope to be back in Augusta next year with my family."

Westwood played at Bay Hill and the Players Championship in preparation for the Masters. He was even scheduled to take part in a news conference Tuesday at Augusta National.

But with his wife so close to giving birth, Westwood notified the tournament committee that he would not be coming, reducing the field to 93 players.

"I think family is much more important than any golf tournament," said Darren Clarke, another star on the European Tour. "There's a lot of majors to be played and this is his first child. I think you've got to respect his decision to stay at home." *AP*

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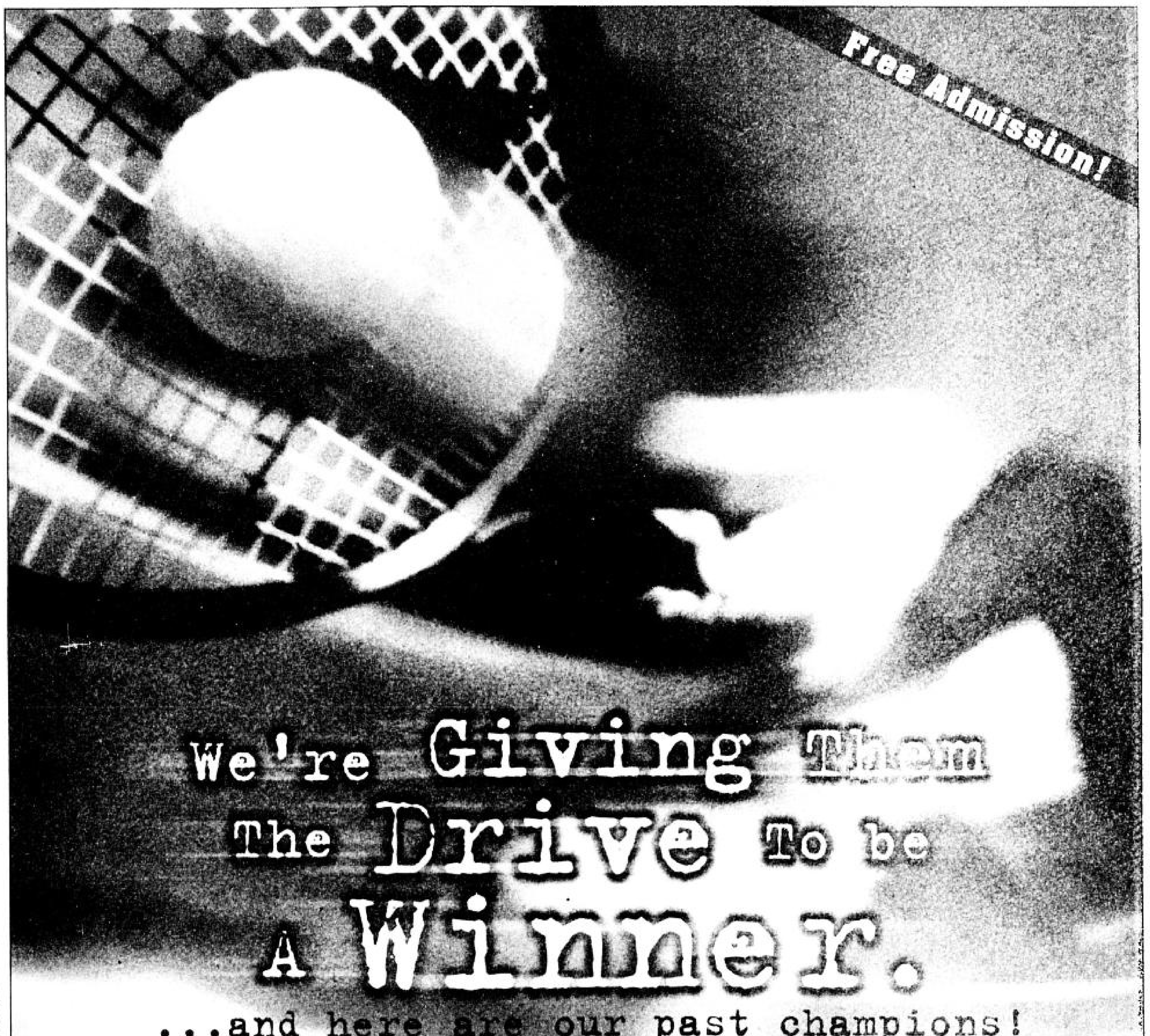
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Mahesh Bhupathi - India
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ATP Champions Doubles (No.42)*

Leander Paes - India
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ATP Champions Doubles (No.42)*

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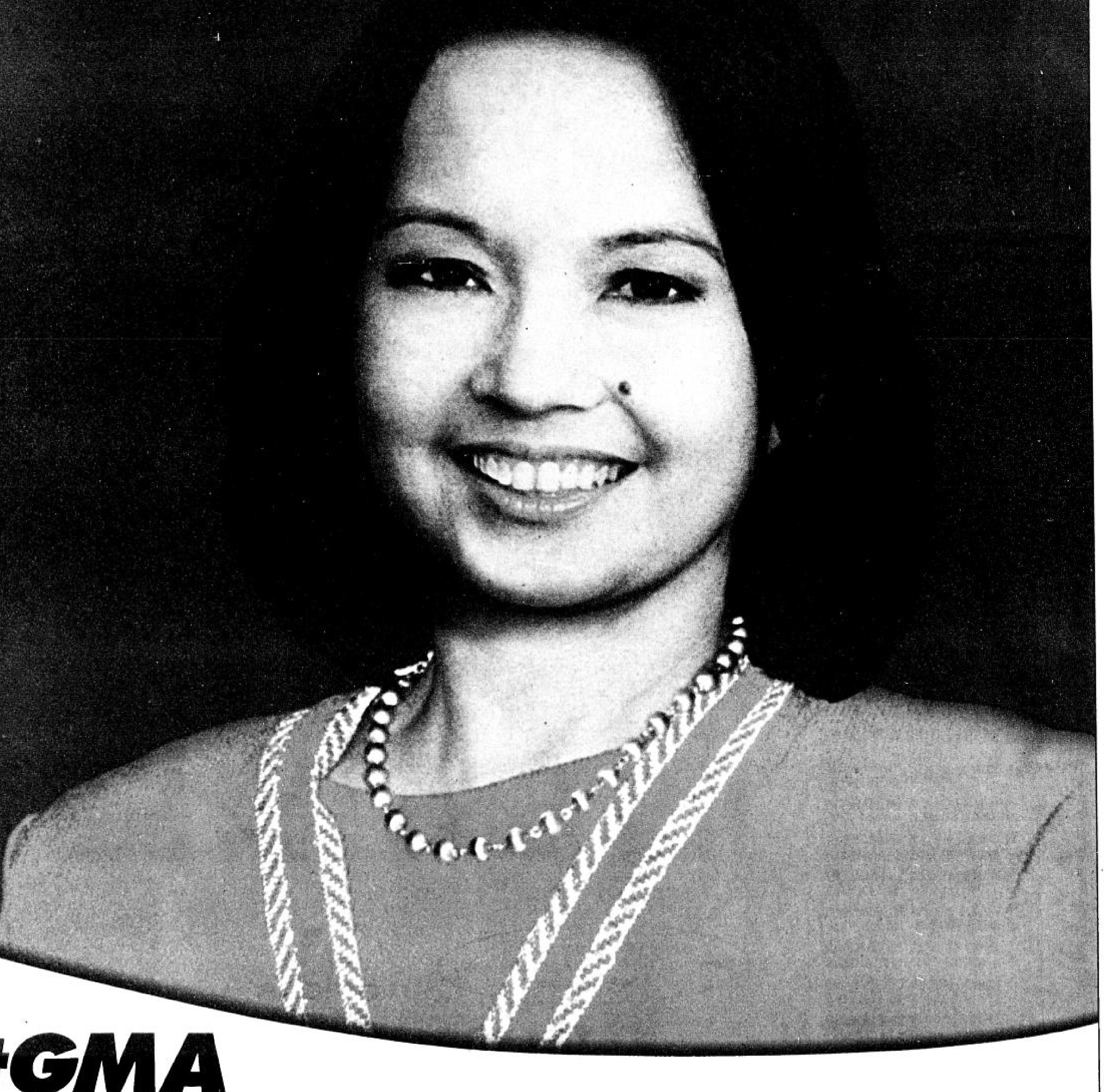

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'Untouchables' hamper LP probe, says source A20

METRO

LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

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Man hammers mother to death

Suspect stuffs body in drum, puts it in pedicab and dumps it

By Christian V. Esguerra

DRUGS may have led a son to bludgeon his mother to death after she refused to sell their television set to support his drug habit.

Police on Tuesday arrested Armando Rasol, 30, of F-135 Selda Sampaguita, Purok-1 in Barangay San Roque, Quezon City, for allegedly killing his mother Erlinda Culasi, 60, a former security officer.

Rasol, who is suspected to be a drug addict, is facing parricide charges before the Quezon City Prosecutor's Office.

Members of the Central Police District Homicide Division led by Senior Insp. Rodolfo Jaraza arrested Rasol at about 6 p.m. on Tuesday.

Rasol, who appeared to be still on shabu, came home on March 29 and told his mother he would sell their TV set so he could buy his illegal drugs, according to police investigation.

Rasol is Culasi's child by her second husband, police learned.

Culasi refused to allow her son to sell the TV set and berated him instead, police said.

Rasol told investigators his mother's verbal assault led him to take a club and to beat her up with it.

Police said the blows to Culasi's head were so hard that her skull cracked open.

Rasol said that after hammering his mother to death, he placed her body in a plastic drum and brought it in a pedicab to Edsa where he boarded a Toyota Tamaraw FX taxi.

He said he alighted from the taxi on Oliveros Drive in Barangay Apolonio Samson in Quezon City where he dumped his mother's body.

Last Sunday, residents of Barangay Apolonio Samson found Culasi's decomposing body.

Rasol is now detained at the CPD headquarters in Camp Karingal.

Probers suspect barangay official in ambush attempts on prosecutor

By Alcuin Papa

A BARANGAY official is suspected of having masterminded the attempts on the life of Manila prosecutor Domingo Orda, the latest of which led to the death of Orda's son on April 2 in Parañaque City.

A police source familiar with the investigation of the case said a personal grudge between Orda's wife and the wife of the barangay official triggered the ambush attempts on the prosecutor.

The source at the Southern Police District also claimed the two women sued each other in court. He declined to name the barangay official so as not to jeopardize the investigation.

"It's a deep-seated rift," the police source said. "It would seem inconsequential, but enough to justify any attempt on Orda's life."

The SPD source did not say what the rift was all about.

Orda has since requested increased police protection for him and his family, following the death of his son and attempts on his life.

On Monday, three men shot dead Orda's son Francis, 20, in Parañaque.

Francis had just taken home a policeman assigned to protect his family when he was ambushed at about 6:30 p.m.

Investigators believed the suspects mistook Francis for his father, as the son was driving Orda's vehicle at the time.

There had been at least two attempts on Orda's life, according to authorities.

Last year, Orda was ambushed as he was driving with one of his children. Orda and his child escaped with minor injuries.

On March 28, gunmen on board a Toyota Corolla tried but failed to kill Orda, also on Saudi Arabia Street.

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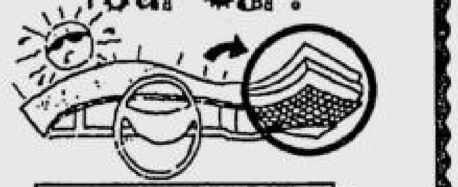

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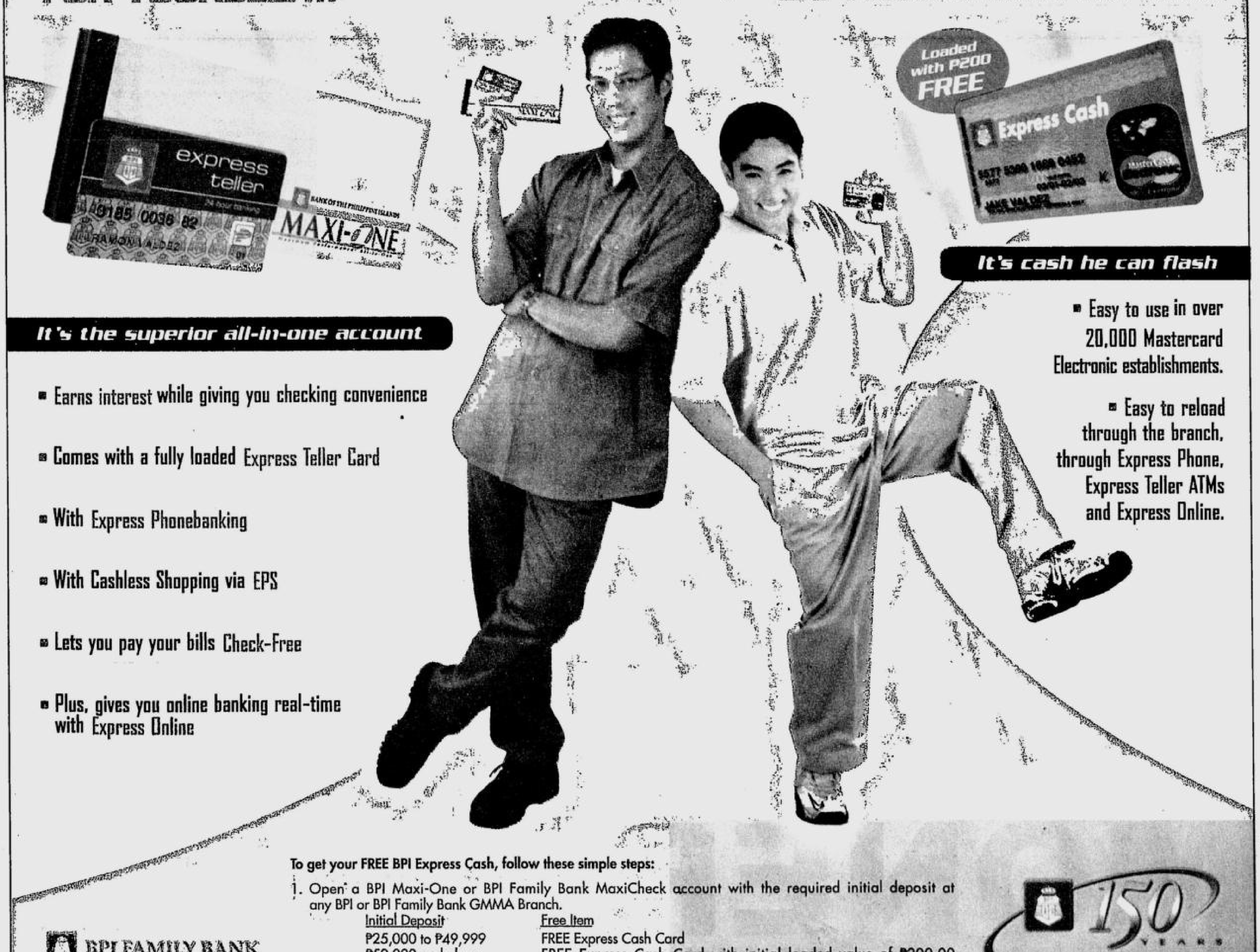

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‘Untouchables’ hamper LP probe, says source

By Alcuin Papa

THE ALLEGED involvement of police officials appears to be giving Las Piñas police a hard time in solving the murder and in arresting the killers of Albert Aguilar, a supporter and relative of Las Piñas Mayor Vergel "Nene" Aguilar.

"They are 'untouchables,' which is why the case has not been solved yet or the perpetrators arrested," a police source told the Inquirer on Tuesday.

Aguilar was shot dead last Thursday by three people in front of the barangay hall of CAA in Las Piñas.

The source, who requested anonymity, said the "untouchables" include a high-ranking retired police officer and an active police major.

Police have learned that the motorcycle the suspects used as a getaway vehicle was seen parked outside the house of the police major.

The source said it was possible that the two police officials hired gunmen belonging to a cult in Cavite to ambush Aguilar because of his anti-drug drive.

Aguilar was the president of the Las Piñas chapter of the Association of Barangay Councils. He was also a supporter of congressional candidate Cynthia Villar and her husband, senatorial candidate Manny Villar.

Cynthia Villar is the mayor's sister.

After Aguilar's shooting, an angry mob caught one of the three suspects, Liberato Delfin of Dasmariñas, Cavite. Delfin was beaten up by the mob and then shot dead by an off-duty cop.

The gunmen were on board a motorcycle when they waited for Aguilar, who had just come from a meeting with other community leaders at the CAA barangay hall on Saging Street.

As Aguilar boarded his Honda City, the three men approached him and shot him point-blank, police said.

Fred Lim, how could you?

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

IF THE authorities don't act fast, the government might lose the case against the suspects in the disappearance—and alleged double murder—of publicist Salvador "Bubby" Dacer and his driver, Manuel Corbito.

If the people behind the disappearance (and alleged murders) are those whom most of the citizenry now knows, then the government is in for a wild goose chase. The suspects are brilliant people who are wise to the ways of criminals because they ran after them before. It's hard to catch former criminal-catchers.

Already, one of the prime suspects in the case, a guy named Digo de Pedro, has been abducted by armed men. He probably could have suffered the fate of Dacer and Corbito. De Pedro, an informer of the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force (PAOCTF), allegedly strangled Corbito before setting him on fire along with Dacer.

De Pedro could buttress claims by witnesses now under NBI custody that PAOCTF agents were involved in the abduction-murder.

***

De Pedro's disappearance was reported to the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) by his wife.

Apparently, those behind Dacer and Corbito's abduction are doing everything to cover up their crime.

The NBI's investigative expertise is being challenged in the Dacer case.

***

The NBI under Director Reynaldo Wycoco, who's extra careful in releasing progress reports on the case, does not admit it but all fingers point to former Philippine National Police chief Panfilo Lacson, who was also PAOCTF chief, as the mastermind.

Under Lacson, the members of the PAOCTF did not move without his knowledge or blessing. Lacson handpicked every member.

So far, the highest ranking officer of PAOCTF who is linked to the Dacer case is Supt. Teofilo Vina, Lacson's provincemate. Witnesses said Vina ordered Dacer's and Corbito's execution.

Vina didn't have the motive to order the murder of Dacer and Corbito. He couldn't have done it on his own.

***

The NBI is hesitant to link Lacson at this time for fear of being accused of playing "dirty politics" against the senatorial candidate of the opposition.

Wycoco is specially careful in not pointing an accusing finger at Lacson because he could be accused of being vindictive. Lacson, after all, bested him in the race for the post of PNP chief. Then-President Erap chose Lacson over Wycoco and another police general, Jewel Canson.

But it's a matter of time before the former PNP chief and PAOCTF head is eventually linked to the disappearance (and murder) of the PR practitioner who counted top-ranking politicians, including former President Ramos, as his clients.

***

Many citizens hope Executive Secretary Renato de Villa was not expressing the official line when he said that President Macapagal-Arroyo has suspended the death penalty for the duration of her three-year term.

Madame President, please say it isn't so! Please say that De Villa was just expressing his own opinion!

Many citizens were disappointed to hear or read about Ms Arroyo's decision not to have any death convict executed during her term.

Only anti-death penalty advocates, who are only a handful, and of course the 1,720 convicts on death row are happy over the news.

***

The popular perception is that Ms Arroyo is giving in to pressures from the Catholic Church, a group that reportedly installed her in power.

Although the country is predominantly Catholic, many citizens don't agree with the Church in its advocacy of the abolition of the death penalty.

Most Catholics are turned off by the Catholic Church for meddling too much in government affairs.

***

Manila mayoral candidate Alfredo Lim has accused Kim Wong, reelectionist Mayor Lito Atienza's chief campaigner, of being a drug lord.

How very unfair of Lim. *Pare,* foul *na yan!* You know very well it's not true.

This writer personally vouches for Kim Wong, whom I have known since he was a gangling 17-year-old gofer at a girlie club in Malate, Manila, in the late 1970s. Wong is a typical *Chinoy* who became rich the hard way.

Even former Manila Mayor and Interior and Local Government Secretary Fred Lim knows this.

How come Wong was Lim's chief campaigner when he ran for a second term in Manila and then for the presidency in 1998? If Wong was a drug lord, as Lim now accuses him of being, why didn't Lim have him arrested then?

Wong got Lim's goat because he now supports Atienza whom, ironically, Lim endorsed to Wong when Lim and Atienza were still allies.

Pareng Fred, how could you!

Police car drives away suspects in kidnap try

By Jerome Aning

THE TIMELY arrival of a police car yesterday morning upset the plan of a spurned suitor and his four friends to abduct an 18-year-old vegetable vendor in Divisoria, Manila.

Alicia Pineda of Sto. Cristo Street, Binondo, told police she was tending to her stall at the corner of Sto. Cristo and C.M. Recto Avenue in Divisoria about 4 a.m. when the five suspects, armed with handguns, tried to kidnap her.

Pineda later told investigator SPO1 Cesar Velasco that it was her ex-boyfriend, Gerald Manahan, who led the group.

Manahan reportedly grabbed Pineda's arm and tried to drag her away from her stall. But her cousin, Bernardo Ramos, 29, grabbed her other arm and refused to let go, police said.

During the commotion, other vendors called the police and barangay watchmen for assistance.

Fortunately, Western Police District mobile patrol unit 329 happened to be passing by Sto. Cristo and scared off the suspects.

Manahan released Pineda and he and his companions fled, police said.

Pineda told SPO1 Velasco she broke up with Manahan months ago because he was allegedly a drug dependent. But Manahan persisted and hounded Pineda, begging her to come back to him, she said.

Police are looking for Manahan and his companions.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, April 5, 2001
5th Week of Lent

1st Reading: **Gen 17:3-9**
Gospel: **Jn 8:51-59**

Jesus said to the Jews, "Truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never experience death." The Jews replied, "Now we know that you have a demon. Abraham died and the prophets as well, but you say: 'Whoever keeps my word will never experience death.' Who do you claim to be? Do you claim to be greater than our father Abraham, who died? And the prophets also died."

Then Jesus said, "If I were to praise myself, it would count for nothing. But he who gives glory to me is the Father, the very one you claim as your God, although you don't know him. I know him and if I were to say that I don't know him, I would be a liar like you. But I know him and I keep his word.

As for Abraham, your ancestor, he looked forward to the day when I would come; and he rejoiced when he saw it."

The Jews then said to him, "You are not yet fifty years old and you have seen Abraham?" And Jesus said "Truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am." They then picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and left the Temple.

Commentary:

People who hold beliefs can be the most manipulative and destructive persons because of their fanaticism. They can sacrifice others to prove that what they hold is the truth. They are truly the ones who have a demon, following the footsteps of the father of lies. If one keeps the word of Jesus on the Father's unconditional love, death will not be an anxious concern. For one who knows one is loved and known by the Father, to live or to die is immaterial. What is of import is the commitment to live or to die for the Father and with him and in him.

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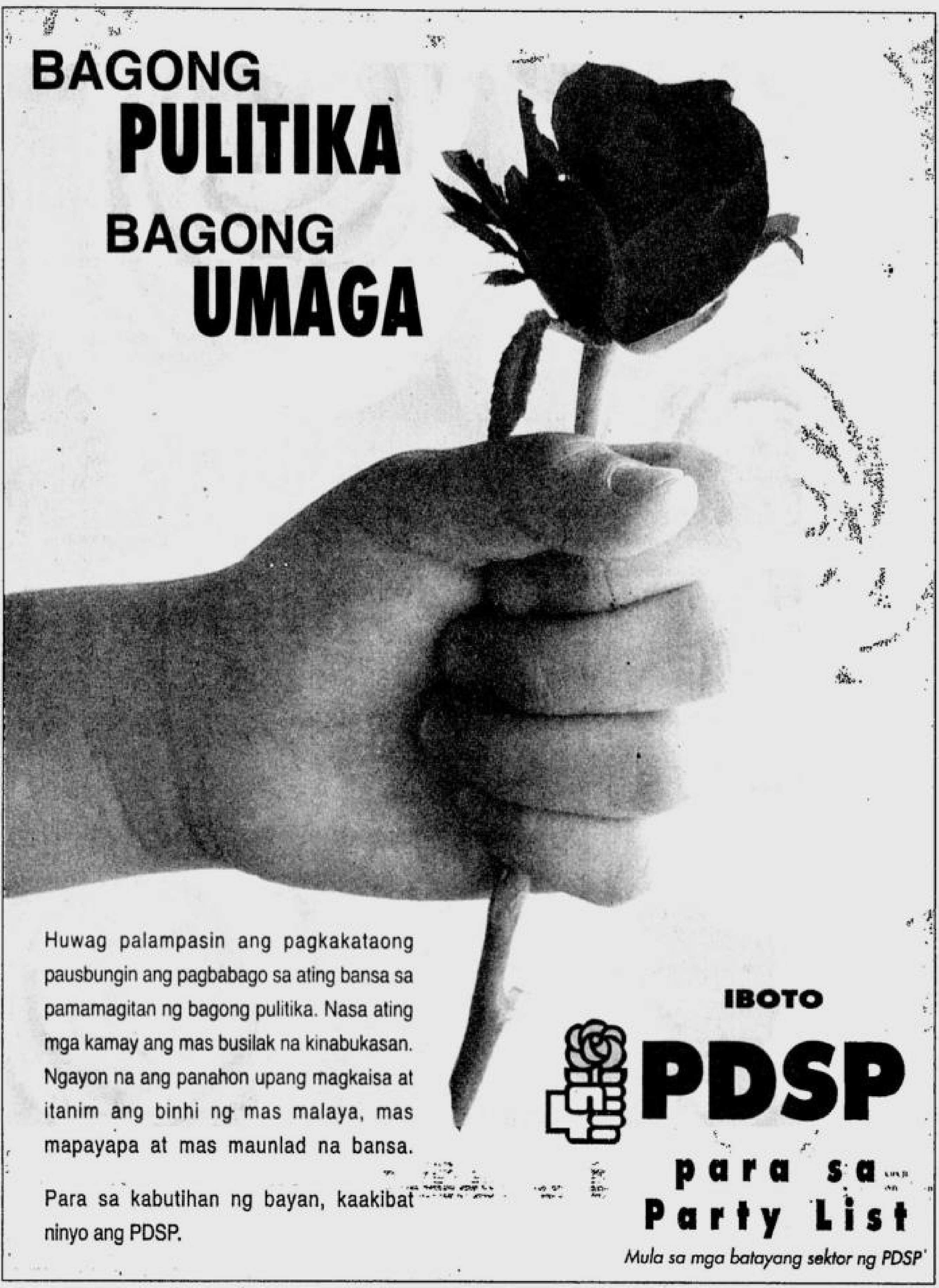
TIP graduation

THE TECHNOLOGICAL Institute of the Philippines-Manila campus will hold its 39th Commencement Exercises today starting at 8 a.m. at the Philippine International Convention Center.

More than 1,000 members of the graduating classes will receive their diplomas after completing the prescribed curricula of their degree programs in chemical, civil, computer, electrical, electronics and communications, industrial, mechanical, architecture, accountancy, commerce, computer science, marine engineering and marine transportation. Sixteen graduates will receive their certificates in drafting technology.

The TIP president, Dr. Teresita U. Quirino, will lead the processional march and confer the degrees and titles on this year's graduates.

Sen. Franklin M. Drilon will be the commencement speaker. This year's theme is "TIP: Focusing on Quality and Efficiency."



BAGONG PULITIKA
BAGONG UMAGA

Huwag palampasin ang pagkakataong pausbungin ang pagbabago sa ating bansa sa pamamagitan ng bagong pulitika. Nasa ating mga kamay ang mas busilak na kinabukasan. Ngayon na ang panahon upang magkaisa at itanim ang binhi ng mas malaya, mas mapayapa at mas maunlad na bansa.

Para sa kabutihan ng bayan, kaakibat ninyo ang PDSP.

IBOTO
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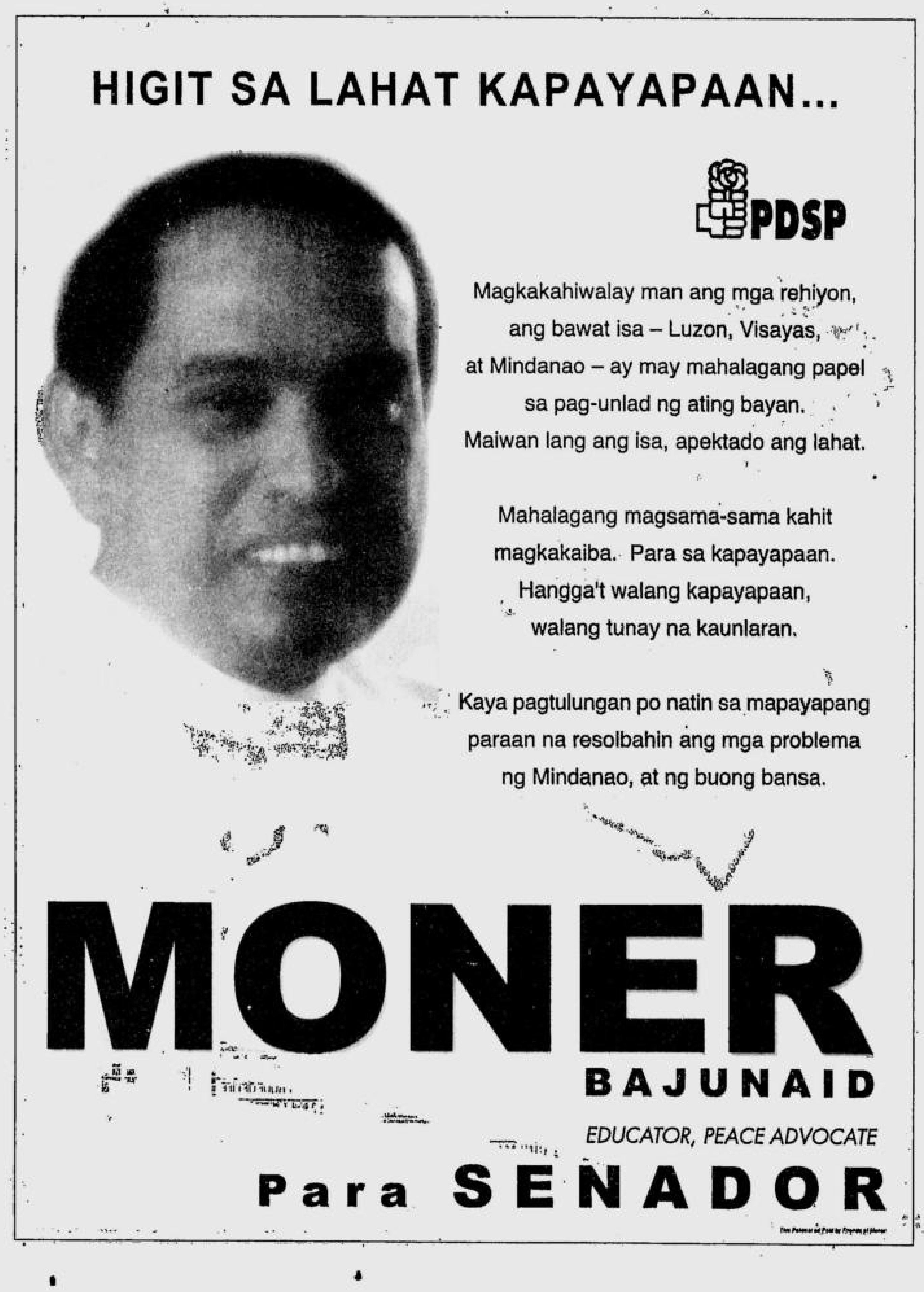
para sa Party List
Mula sa mga batayang sektor ng PDSP'



HIGIT SA LAHAT KAPAYAPAAN...

PDSP

Magkakahiwalay man ang mga rehiyon,
ang bawat isa – Luzon, Visayas,
at Mindanao – ay may mahalagang papel
sa pag-unlad ng ating bayan.
Maiwan lang ang isa, apektado ang lahat.

Mahalagang magsama-sama kahit
magkakaiba. Para sa kapayapaan.
Hangga't walang kapayapaan,
walang tunay na kaunlaran.

Kaya pagtulungan po natin sa mapayapang
paraan na resolbahin ang mga problema
ng Mindanao, at ng buong bansa.

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1	DOLBY SURROUND	QUILLS
2	DOLBY SURROUND	DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT
3	DOLBY DIGITAL	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
4	DOLBY SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
5	DOLBY DIGITAL EX	GLADIATOR (RI)
6	DOLBY SURROUND	SA HULING PAGHIINTAY
7	DOLBY SURROUND	THEY NEST
8	DOLBY SURROUND	SAVE THE LAST DANCE

SM CENTERPOINT 7160032 / 7161416

1	DOLBY SURROUND	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
2	DOLBY SURROUND	DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT
3	DTS	GLADIATOR (RI)
4	DOLBY SURROUND	SEDUCER
5	DOLBY DIGITAL	SAVE THE LAST DANCE
6	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	KRISTO
7	DOLBY SURROUND	WEDDING PLANNER
8	DOLBY SURROUND	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
9	DOLBY SURROUND	THEY NEST
10	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	TANGING YAMAN (RI)

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 9360749

1	DOLBY SURROUND	KRISTO
2	DOLBY SURROUND	THE GIFT
3	DOLBY SURROUND	SEDUCER
4	DOLBY DIGITAL	SAVE THE LAST DANCE
5	DOLBY SURROUND	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
6	DOLBY SURROUND	TANGING YAMAN (RI)
7	DOLBY DIGITAL	GLADIATOR (RI)
8	DOLBY SURROUND	THEY NEST
9	DOLBY SURROUND	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
10	DOLBY SURROUND	DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT
11	DOLBY SURROUND	WEDDING PLANNER
12	DOLBY SURROUND	DRACULA 2000

SM CITY MANILA 5239240

1	DOLBY DIGITAL	THE GIFT
2	DOLBY DIGITAL	THEY NEST
3	DOLBY SURROUND	DRACULA 2000
4	DOLBY SURROUND	SAVE THE LAST DANCE
5	DOLBY DIGITAL	WEDDING PLANNER
6	DOLBY DIGITAL EX	GLADIATOR (RI)
7	DOLBY SURROUND	ACHILLES
8	DOLBY SURROUND	KRISTO
9	DOLBY SURROUND	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
10	DOLBY SURROUND	TANGING YAMAN (RI)
11	DOLBY SURROUND	SEDUCERS
12	DOLBY SURROUND	DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT

GUADALUPE COMM'L CTR 8820950

1	ULTRA SURROUND	DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT
2	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	THEY NEST
3	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	UHAW SA INIT

SM MEGAMALL 6331901 • 6320401

1	DOLBY DIGITAL	GLADIATOR (RI)
2	DOLBY SURROUND	SECRET OF THE ANDES
3	DOLBY DIGITAL	SAVE THE LAST DANCE
4	DTS	THEY NEST
5	DOLBY SURROUND	THE GIFT
6	DOLBY SURROUND	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
7	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
8	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
9	DOLBY SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
10	DOLBY SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
11	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
12	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION

SM CITY NORTH EDSA 9296452

1	DOLBY SURROUND	SEDUCER
2	DOLBY SURROUND	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
3	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT
4	DOLBY SURROUND	TANGING YAMAN (RI)
5	DOLBY SURROUND	THEY NEST
6	DOLBY SURROUND	WEDDING PLANNER
7	DTS	GLADIATOR (RI)
8	DOLBY DIGITAL	SAVE THE LAST DANCE
9	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	MS. CONGENIALITY
10	DOLBY SURROUND	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
11	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	THE GIFT
12	DOLBY SURROUND	CROUCHING TIGER (RI)

SM SOUTHMALL 8008888 • 8044782

1	ULTRA SURROUND	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
2	ULTRA SURROUND	THEY NEST
3	DOLBY DIGITAL EX	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
4	ULTRA SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
5	ULTRA SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
6	ULTRA SURROUND	DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT
7	ULTRA SURROUND	SAVE THE LAST DANCE
8	DOLBY DIGITAL EX	GLADIATOR (RI)
9	ULTRA SURROUND	SEDUCER
10	ULTRA SURROUND	TANGING YAMAN (RI)

TUTUBAN CENTER 2514302

1	ULTRA SURROUND	GLADIATOR (RI)
2	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	THEY NEST
3	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
4	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT

SM CEBU 2313876

1	DOLBY SURROUND	GLADIATOR (RI)
2	ULTRA SURROUND	BILLY ELLIOT
3	ULTRA SURROUND	CHOCOLAT
4	ULTRA SURROUND	OBJECT OF OBSESSION
5	ULTRA SURROUND	BABAENG PUTIK
6	ULTRA SURROUND	TOTAL AIKIDO
7	DOLBY SURROUND	SECRET OF THE ANDES

SM ILOILO 3209422

1	ULTRA SURROUND	PANABLA
2	ULTRA SURROUND	CLOSED
3	ULTRA SURROUND	PURPLE STORM
4	ULTRA SURROUND	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
5	ULTRA SURROUND	MS. CONGENIALITY
6	ULTRA SURROUND	CHOCOLAT
7	ULTRA SURROUND	CLOSED
8	ULTRA SURROUND	OBJECT OF OBSESSION

SM PAMPANGA 7130015

1	DOLBY DIGITAL EX	SAVE THE LAST DANCE
2	DOLBY DIGITAL EX	GLADIATOR (RI)
3	DOLBY SURROUND	QUILLS
4	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	MS. CONGENIALITY
5	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	THEY NEST
6	DOLBY SURROUND	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY

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1 GLADIATOR
2 MS. CONGENIALITY
3 SEDUCER
4 THEY NEST

[illegible]

1 CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
2 THE GIFT In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
3 GLADIATOR THX In DSD/SDDS/DTS DIGITAL SOUND
4 SECRET OF THE ANDES In DTS DIGITAL SOUND — Art Film
5 CHOCOLAT In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
6 SAVE THE LAST DANCE In DTS/SDDS DIGITAL SOUND
7 WEDDING PLANNER In DTS DIGITAL SOUND

[illegible]

1 MALENA In DOLBY STEREO DIGITAL SOUND
2 GLADIATOR In SONY DYNAMIC DIGITAL SOUND
3 SAVE THE LAST DANCE In DOLBY STEREO DIGITAL SOUND
4 Onstage

[illegible]

1 GLADIATOR THX In SDS/1001 DIGITAL SOUND
2 THE GIFT In DSD DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
3 SAVE THE LAST DANCE In DTS DIGITAL SOUND
4 WEDDING PLANNER In DTS DIGITAL SOUND
5 CHOCOLAT In DTS DIGITAL SOUND

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3 (DTS) GREEN MILE
4 (SOLA DTS) GLADIATOR
5 (SOLA DOLBY) THE GIFT
6 (SOLA SDDS) YOU'VE GOT MAIL
7 (SOLA DOLBY) WEDDING PLANNER
8 [illegible] ERIN BROCKOVICH
9 [illegible] ROMEO MUST DIE
10 [illegible] PATRIOT

Pearl Plaza Cinemas
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1 UHAW SA INIT
2 KRISTO
3 (DTS)
4
5
6 (DTS)
Golden Pearl THX

Masagana CINEMAX 1-2 & 3
(Kalaw) tel 536.4315
1 (DOLBY) GLADIATOR
2 (DTS) KRISTO
3 DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 831.6603
1 UUBUSIN KO ANG BALA..
2 DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT
3 UHAW SA INIT

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3 UHAW SA INIT
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5 KRISTO

Metropolis
(Alabang) tel 543.4001
1 DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT
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3 SEDUCER
4 UHAW SA INIT
5 OOOPS, TEKA LANG
6 GLADIATOR
7 KRISTO
8 SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY

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3 MAY GATAS PA SA LABI
4 THE ELIMINATOR

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2 OOOPS, TEKA LANG

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1 RESERVE
2 DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT
3 KRISTO

Spring
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1 DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT
A KRISTO

JC Cinema
(Parañaque) tel 825.8626
1
3

GOTESCO CINEMA

City
(Manila) tel 734.8568
1 (DOLBY) GLADIATOR
2 SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
3 KRISTO
4 BABAENG PUTIK
5 UUBUSIN KO ANG BALA...
6 DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT
7 (DTS) SEDUCER
8 (SDDS) THEY NEST
9 (DOLBY) SAVE THE LAST DANCE

Caloocan
tel 362.3500
2 DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT
3 RESERVE
4 RESERVE

Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 364.3781
1 SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
2 BABAENG PUTIK
3 OOOPS, TEKA LANG
4 (SDDS) SEDUCER
5 UUBUSIN KO ANG BALA
6 (DOLBY) DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT
7 (DTS) GLADIATOR
8 KRISTO
9 UHAW SA INIT

Commonwealth
tel 951.0083
1 (DTS) GLADIATOR
2 DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT
3 SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
4 UHAW SA INIT
5 (SDDS) SEDUCER
6 KRISTO
7 (DOLBY) THEY NEST
8 OOPS TEKA LANG

Ortigas
tel 656.6795
1 RESERVE
2 RESERVE
3 (DTS) GLADIATOR
4 SEDUCER
5 (SDDS) DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT
6 (DOLBY) UHAW SA INIT
7 (DOLBY) KRISTO

Universal
(Manila) tel 733.2470
1 DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT

Sampaguita
(Cubao) tel 911.7868
1 DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT

Dilson
(Manila) tel 734.7724
Dilson DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT
Lords BODY TO BODY
Jannet BABAENG PUTIK

MARKETPLACE Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3854
1 KRISTO
2 GLADIATOR
3 THEY NEST
4 UHAW SA INIT

Prima
(Pasig) tel 641.1215
1
3 DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT

Super Cinerama
(Manila) tel 733.4226 or 733.4238
1 THEY NEST
2 SEDUCER
3 UUBUSIN KO ANG BALA..
4 DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT
5 SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY

Divisoria Mall
(Manila) tel 244.4560 or 244.4619
1 DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT
2 UHAW SA INIT
3 TOTAL AIKIDO
4 GLADIATOR
5 BABAENG PUTIK
6 OOOPS, TEKA LANG

Baclaran LRT Cinema
tel 512.0115 or 512.0116
1 DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT
2 UUBUSIN KO ANG BALA...
3 KRISTO

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa Laguna)
tel (049) 534.2185 / 534.2198
1 BABAENG PUITK
2 UHAW SA INIT
3 (DTS) GLADIATOR

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 BABAENG PUTIK
2 (DTS) WEDDING PLANNER
3 (DOLBY) GLADIATOR
4 THE GIFT

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 (SDDS) GLADIATOR
2 DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT
3 UHAW SA INIT
4 (DTS) KRISTO

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 (DOLBY) THE GIFT
2 BABAENG PUTIK
3 (DTS) GLADIATOR
4 TOTAL AIKIDO
5 UHAW SA INIT

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883
1 THEY NEST
2 BABAENG PUTIK
3 UHAW SA INIT

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 536.5101
1 THEY NEST
2 [illegible]
3 [illegible] INIT

Olivarez [illegible]tay
1
2
3 UHAW SA INIT

Morales Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.9736
1
2
3

Sunshine
(FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376
1 DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT
2
3
4

Cabuyao
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1 (DTS) BABAENG PUTIK
2 (DTS) RESERVE

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(Cavite) tel (046) 416.2365
1 RESERVE

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657
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2 BABAENG PUTIK
3 TOTAL AIKIDO

Fiesta World Mall
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1 BABAENG PUTIK
2 UHAW SA INIT
3 THE BAIT
4 WEDDING PLANNER

Berma
tel 879.2188
1 DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT
2 UUBUSIN KO ANG BALA

CitiMall
(Parañaque) tel 820.7269
1 DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT
2
3
4

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 (DOLBY EX) GLADIATOR
2 SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
3 ANAK
4 (DTS EX) SAVE THE LAST DANCE

*Movies [illegible] to change without [illegible] notice

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MOVIE GUIDE

ARANETA CENTER THEATERS 911-3101

ALI MALL CINEPLEX-1	DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-2	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-3 (DDS)	GLADIATOR
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-4 (SDDS)	THEY NEST
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-5 (DTS)	SAVE THE LAST DANCE
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-6 (DOLBY)	THE GIFT
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-7 (DOLBY)	WEDDING PLANNER
FARMERS PLAZA-1 (DOLBY)	GLADIATOR
FARMERS PLAZA-2 (DOLBY)	DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT
FIESTA CARNIVAL	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
NEW FRONTIER	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT
MIRAMAR	TUHOG / FIRST DESIRE
ODEON	GLADIATOR
ODEON-2	SEDUCER
ROBEN	DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT
TANDEM-1	UHAW SA INIT
TANDEM-2	TOTAL AIKIDO
TIMES	EYE OF BEHOLDER / REMEMBER THE TITANS
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	CLOSED
ACT-4	CLOSED
CORONET-2	TOTAL AIKIDO
QUEZON-1	UHAW SA INIT
REMAR	SEDUCER
REMAR-2	UHAW SA INIT
CUBAO	
OCEAN SUPERAMA	BABAENG PUTIK
OCEAN CINEMA-A	PANABLA
OCEAN CINEMA-B	CRISELDA
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-78 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	SECRET OF THE ANDES
CINEMA-2	MS CONGENIALITY
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-54091 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
CINEMA-2	BABAENG PUTIK
CINEMA-3	UHAW SA INIT
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	QUILLS
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	BAIT
CINEMA-6	PANABLA
CINEMA-7	UHAW SA INIT
CINEMA-8	MS. CONGENIALITY
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	THEY NEST
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	THE GIFT
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	SAVE THE LAST DANCE
CINEMA-12	WEDDING PLANNER
CINEMA-14	TOTAL AIKIDO
CINEMA-15	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
LORES	
CINEMA-2	RED PLANET
CINEMA-3	PROOF OF LIFE
POWER PLANT CINEMA	
CINEMA-1	CHOCOLAT
CINEMA-2	GLADIATOR
CINEMA-3	CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON
CINEMA-4	THE GIFT
CINEMA-5	TANGING YAMAN
CINEMA-6	SAVE THE LAST DANCE

MISALUCHA

Jazz, wine festival

SAX player Vince will topbill the Robert Mondavi summer wine and jazz festival, hosted by Anthony's Wines and Spirits Corp. (AWSC).

Jazz rhythms start playing April 5-7 at the Street Café of the Power Plant, Lopez Drive, Rockwell Center. Participating bars and restaurants are Cork Wine Cellar and Grille, Che, Via Mare, Struan and Tang's Tea Salon, Oyster Bar, Pacific Wharf and Rockwell Club.

Vince, also known as John Vincent D. Lanorra, is a mainstay at San Mig El Pueblo in Ortigas Center.

An accomplished sax player for over 11 years, Vince has connected with audiences in famous bars and restaurants including Giraffe, Beluga Bistro and Pravda Wine Bar.

He recently toured Taiwan and Brunei for a series of shows.

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ENTERTAINMENT

LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

Sexy business as usual

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

THE CONTROVERSY over sexy movies continues to exercise both liberals and conservatives alike, but the current bottom line is, it doesn't appear to have made much of an impact on the local movies up for viewing, which are still primarily of the "bold" persuasion.

On April 1, newspapers' entertainment pages announced the screening or imminent opening of these movies: "Sa Huling Paghihintay" with **Rica Peralejo**, "Uhaw sa Init ng Pagmamahal" with **Allona Amor**, "Di Mapigil ang Init" with **Hazel Espinosa**, "Babaing Putik" with **Klaudia Koronel**, "Total Aikido" with **Macky Woo** and **Aya Medel**, "Kristo" with **Matt Ranillo III**, and "Abakada . . . Ina" with **Lorna Tolentino**.

The first four of these movies are sexy productions, while "Total Aikido" is action with some sexy scenes (c/o Aya Medel), "Kristo" is an old religious film reissued for Holy Week, and "Abakada . . . Ina" is a drama.

Before the flap over "Live Show," we surveyed the movie scene and reported that more than half of the local films then being shown were of the "bold" variety. As of April 1, the ratio of something like 60-40 in favor of sexy movies continues to hold true.

We understand why producers like bankrolling sex flicks (they can be made fast and relatively cheaply, and if they click with randy viewers, they can make a huge profit for their financiers).

But we keep stressing that this preponderance of sexy productions isn't healthy for the movie industry and its audience.

If things don't change soon, it would mean that producers don't want to clean up their act, despite the public outcry for them to do so. And the controversy will continue to rage.

Some producers say that the fact that many current local movies are sex-oriented is no big deal, since they are given R-18 (for adults only) classifications anyway, which effectively keeps them out of the reach of minors.

This may be true, but there's still something basically wrong with an industry that has such a strong bias in favor of sex. This prevents other important themes from being tackled on the big screen, as they should be if viewers are to get a balanced, undistorted view of life.

Others also observe that it isn't true that R-18 classifications will "insulate" minors from erotic films. Even if theater attendance is strictly monitored, tape and disc copies of the "hottest" films are being sold like hotcakes, so even minors could get to watch those movies without having to enter a moviehouse.

But that's not really the most important point in this discussion. What's troubling is many producers' continuing refusal to make movies that serve not just viewers' erotic impulses but the totality of their human make-up. Can parents, educators and religious leaders be faulted for bicking this intrasigence?

One hopeful sign: only a few days ago, Regal Films, which has been doing a lot of small, sexy productions, put out a call for wholesome talents for a teen film it's planning to do.

Is this an early indication that the studio is finally shifting gears? Could it be going back to its popular "Regal Babies" talent search and star build-up program of a decade ago, which discovered such durable stars as **Maricel Soriano** and **Dina Bonnevie**?

If so, that is a good sign. Let's hope, though, that Regal doesn't go back to dishing out a near-exclusive diet of silly teen flicks. Even youth movies can be rendered with a measure of significance.

We're not really against movies about sex, just the excessive preponderance of erotic films. So we hope that our producers give us a balanced line-up of films in the coming months, so the many aspects of human life are depicted onscreen. That's realy the hallmark of a healthy, venturesome and responsible film industry.

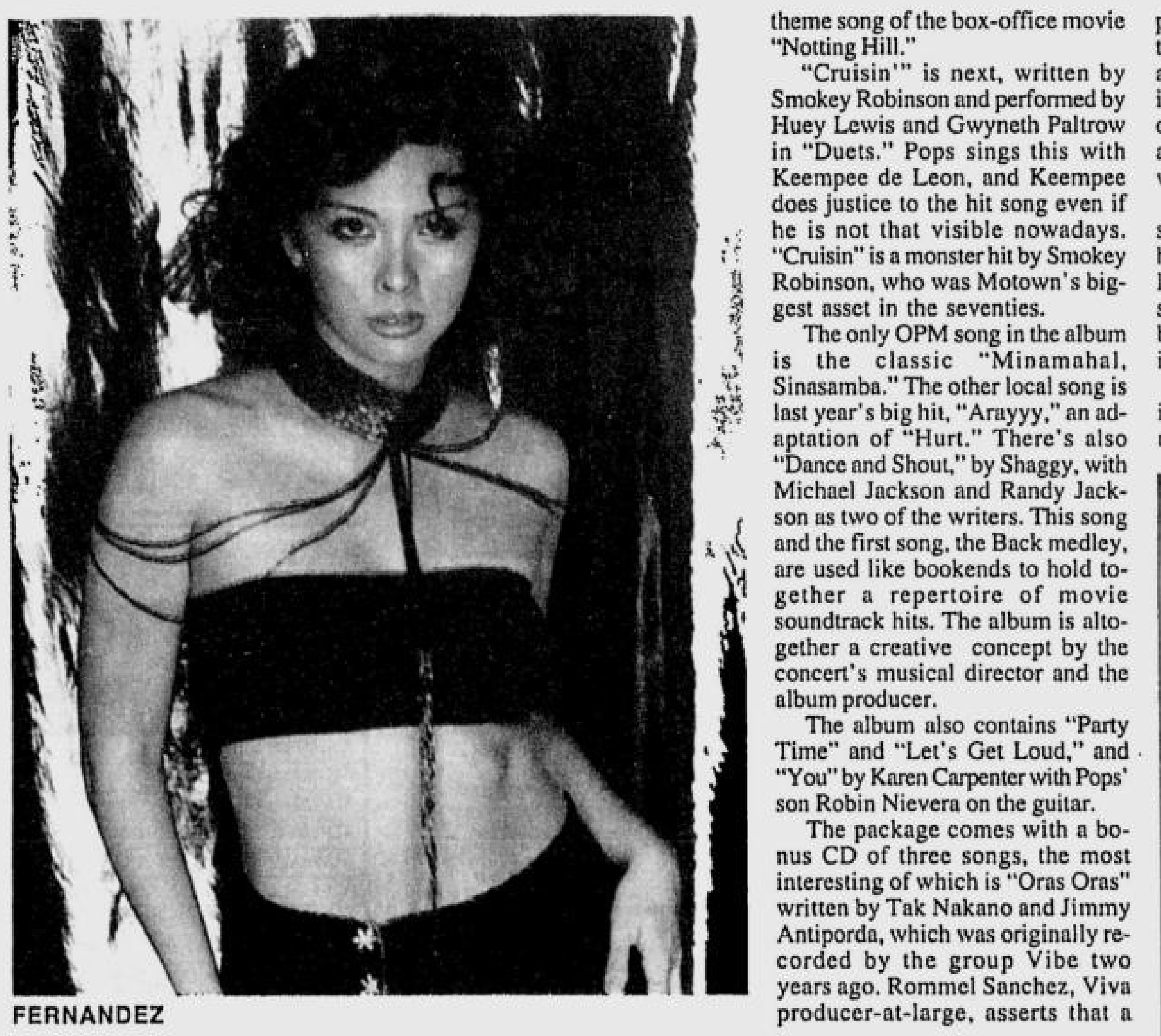
'Rico'

REBEL Magdagasang, a resident composer of Viva Records, has written the music for "Rico," an original musical about streetchildren that will open in Davao City on April 6. The musical is produced by **Chin Bon Lu** of the LCB Performing Arts Center.

Rebel's songs have been included in some Viva's albums. "For Everything" is in **Rachel Alejandro**'s "Tanging Pangarap" album, and in "MTV's Fabulous Divas," while "Maghihintay Ako" was made the theme song of the **Rica Peralejo** starrer, "Sa Huling Paghihintay."

Pops revives pop and achieves a double victory

BY FRED SAMANTELA



FERNANDEZ

POPS Fernandez recently launched "Shindig Live," her first live album, at Rockwell Plant Mall in Makati, and the launch was done in style.

Pops was backed by a string ensemble. However, since the stage was originally meant for her alone, she could not move about after she insisted at the last minute to bring the ensemble on stage with her.

The title alone tells us that the album is retro. In fact, it was '70s, a broad era of pop in both local and international music.

The album opens with a "Back" medley: "Bring It All Back," "I Want You Back." These are some of the best songs of Jackson 5, which had Michael Jackson when Michael was still black and sang like one.

The sound of Motown works well for Pops. If this retro mania stays longer in the local music industry, Pops should "copyright," so to speak, Motown hits, particularly by the Supremes and Diana Ross.

The second song is "Hey," which is a must in the live concert scene and is very engaging. It is followed by "Fallin,'" which lately is very popular again, having been revived by Lea Salonga, Regine Velasquez and others.

Then there's something more recent, "When You Say Nothing at All," which was originally recorded by Ronan Keating and was the theme song of the box-office movie "Notting Hill."

"Cruisin'" is next, written by Smokey Robinson and performed by Huey Lewis and Gwyneth Paltrow in "Duets." Pops sings this with Keempee de Leon, and Keempee does justice to the hit song even if he is not that visible nowadays. "Cruisin" is a monster hit by Smokey Robinson, who was Motown's biggest asset in the seventies.

The only OPM song in the album is the classic "Minamahal, Sinasamba." The other local song is last year's big hit, "Arayyy," an adaptation of "Hurt." There's also "Dance and Shout," by Shaggy, with Michael Jackson and Randy Jackson as two of the writers. This song and the first song, the Back medley, are used like bookends to hold together a repertoire of movie soundtrack hits. The album is altogether a creative concept by the concert's musical director and the album producer.

The album also contains "Party Time" and "Let's Get Loud," and "You" by Karen Carpenter with Pops' son Robin Nievera on the guitar.

The package comes with a bonus CD of three songs, the most interesting of which is "Oras Oras" written by Tak Nakano and Jimmy Antiporda, which was originally recorded by the group Vibe two years ago. Rommel Sanchez, Viva producer-at-large, asserts that a part 2 of "Shindig" is possible, there being enough songs stashed away from the live recording. The impatient fellow who asked Pops, during the album launch, to do an all-original album might have to wait longer.

In the album launch only the slow songs were performed by Pops and her guest, her son Robin. Pops looked tired after the interviews but she revealed that the show would be hitting the road abroad, in Washington D.C. and Dallas, Texas.

Reviving pop songs is capitalizing on nostalgia, which is very commercial. Critic/author Greil Marcus notes how pop songs are talked about as the soundtrack of our lives. "Lives change and so do soundtracks even if they're made up of the same songs," he wrote. So it is a double victory when you revive a pop song and it works.

When Pops recorded her first single with Vicor, where she joined her now-ex-husband Martin Nievera, the recording company (of which this writer used to be part) spent three to four times more than the average cost and employed the best musicians and songwriters. That was more than 12 years ago. But it was well worth it in the end.

FREESTYLE

Ex-Spandau Ballet members perform in back-to-back concert with Freestyle

"SO true, funny how it seems, always in time but never in line of dreams."

Remember this song? Who wouldn't? If you were a child of the '80s you would definitely remember British crooners in dapper suits headed by Tony Hadley, then popularly known as Spandau Ballet.

Spandau Ballet was one of the best selling recording artists of that decade and was constantly competing for dominance on the music charts against Duran Duran.

Fast track to the '90s.

"This time I'm gonna let you slip away."

Now, if you are a live concert enthusiast, you would definitely know this song is from Freestyle, the Davao-bred young band currently dominating the pop charts today. Their two albums have turned platinum and their recent outing, "Freestyle Live," is also nearing the mark.

HADLEY

On Saturday, April 7, 8 p.m. at Tanghalang Francisco Balagtas (formerly Folk Arts Theater), the best of the '80s and '90s will be heard live from two respected artists of two different decades.

Ex-Spandau Ballet members Tony Hadley, John Keeble and Steve Norman will share the stage with Filipino talents Jinky and Top Suzara and the rest of Freestyle band in the special concert, "True, This Time."

Tony Hadley, Steve Norman and John Keeble have prepared a repertoire of their classic cult hits that made hearts swoon and made feet dance to their beat, favorites such as "Round and Round," "Gold," "I'll Fly for You," "Only When You Leave," "Through the Barricades" and "True."

Meanwhile, Freestyle will regale the crowd with their chart-toppers "So Slow," "Before I Let You Go," "Til I Found You" and "This Time."

There will also be surprise production numbers from the two bands.

Tickets are available at all National Bookstore Ticketworld outlets, Tower Records, Robinson's Place Manila, Robinson's Galleria and Music Museum ticketron. Call 891-5610.

Artists hold benefit show for TB patients

SIX artists and three popular bands have joined the fight against tuberculosis, now the fifth leading cause of death in the country.

A benefit concert for the tuberculosis control program, "Musika, Noon at Ngayon," is set on April 20 at the Tanghalang Francisco Balagtas (Folk Arts Theater).

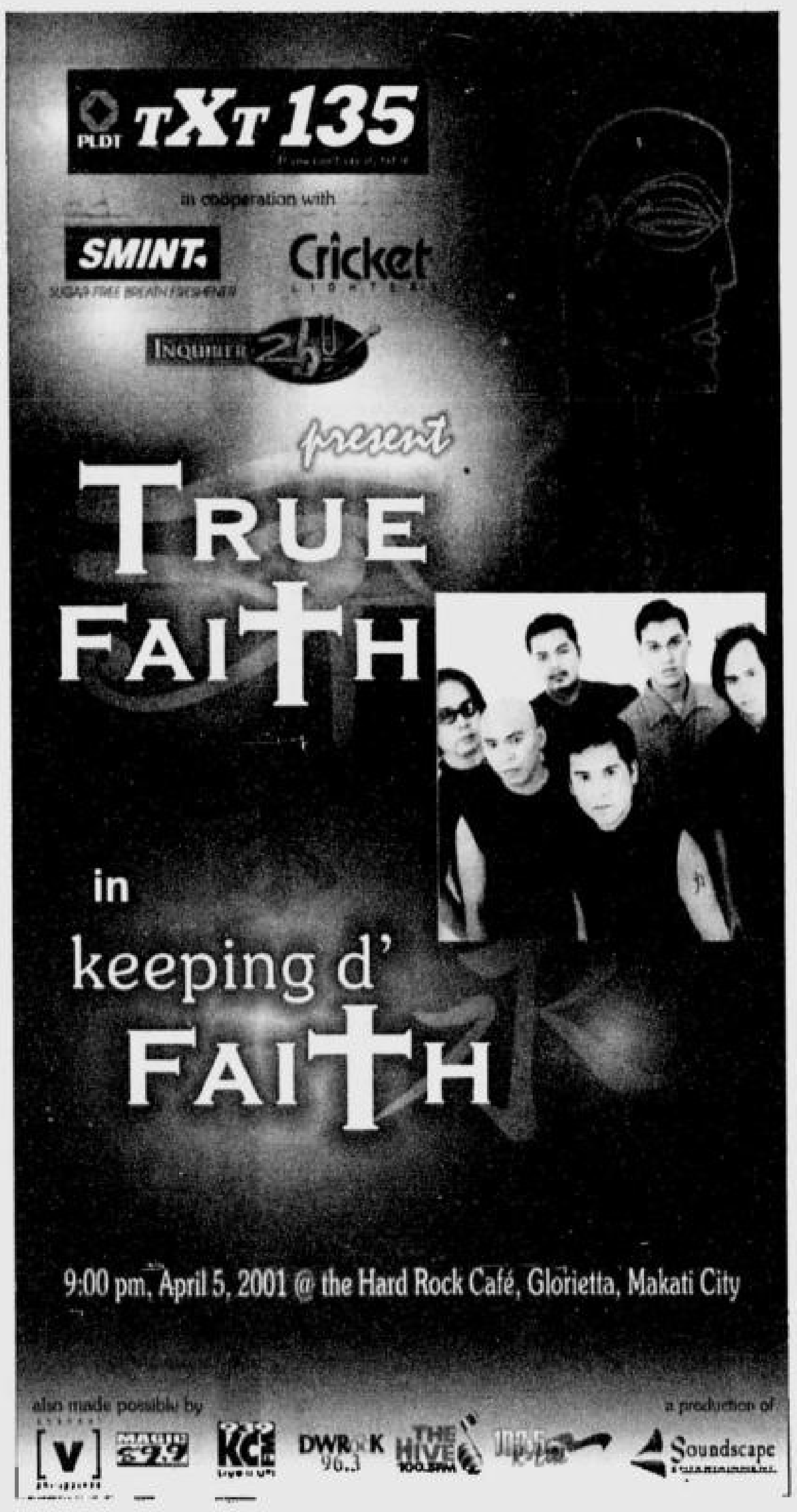
The show aims to raise P1 million for the Philippine Tuberculosis Society which operates Quezon Institute where poor TB patients are treated.

"We would like to get involved in helping prevent, if not eradicate TB, which is curable than AIDS/HIV," says Mike Hanopol, one of the performers in the concerts.

Others who signed up to perform are Sampaguita, Coritha, Pepe Smith, Mike and Noah. The Eraserheads, Rivermaya and Parokya ni Edgar will also be featured.

Hanopol said the show aims to combine three decades of classic Filipino music and gather both the young and old to support anti-TB projects.

Tickets are available at Ticketworld outlets (891-5610), National Bookstore, ShoeMart, Robinson's and the Citizens Mass Media Services (527-1321).



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1 CHOCOLAT - P13 12:10, 2:40, 5:10, 7:40, 10:10	2 GLADIATOR - P13 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 9:30	3 CROUCHING TIGER - P13 11:20, 1:50, 4:20, 6:50, 9:30
4 THE GIFT - P13 12:00, 2:45, 5:10, 7:35, 10:00	5 TANGING YAMAN - G 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 9:50	6 SAVE THE LAST DANCE - P13 12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00

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The film tells the story of a beautiful woman (Monica Bellucci) who inspires the sexual awakenings of a group of adolescent boys in Sicily.
Language: Italian w/ English subtitles
AWARD NOMINATIONS
Best Original Score & Best Cinematography
@ the73rd Annual Academy Awards
Best Foreign Language Film
@ the Golden Globe Awards

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UPS picks Clark as new hub

BY GIL C. CABACUNGAN JR.

UNITED Parcel Service, the world's biggest express carrier and package delivery company, is investing $300 million at the Clark International Airport to build its Asian gateway in the Philippines.

Trade Secretary Manuel "Mar" Roxas II said President Macapagal-Arroyo and top officials of UPS will sign today a letter of intent for the Atlanta-based courier's plan to set up a new regional hub in the country. UPS operates three air hubs in the region—Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan.

Roxas said UPS has applied for incentives with the state-run Clark Development Corp. The company is eyeing tax- and duty-free importation of capital equipment for its proposed hub in Clark.

Roxas said UPS was planning to dedicate at least 10 daily flights for the initial year of the Clark gateway. UPS has a fleet of 238 aircraft serving nearly two million customers over 200 countries worldwide.

UPS has been operating through its local service agent, Delbros Inc., since 1988. In 1997, UPS and Delbros formed a joint venture.

In her prepared speech, the President said: "This is an opportunity for the Philippines to be strategically located in a global network of economies and communities." She also said that by locating in Clark, the Philippines would be providing the region with an expanded and stronger network for economic integration.

The Philippines is becoming the favored gateway site for global couriers in the Asia-Pacific region, which despite being relatively small compared to the US market, is the fastest growing region. In the Asean, between 30 percent and 40 percent of the region's $611 billion in annual trade is shipped through air.

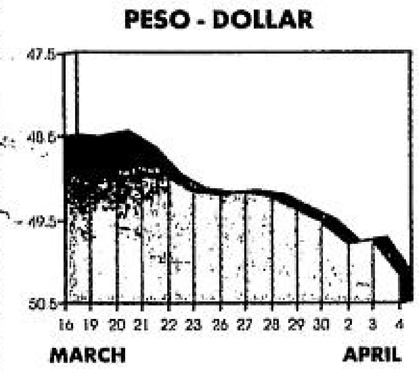
Memphis-based Federal Express Corp. has been operating its regional hub at the former Subic naval base since 1997. Emboldened by the efficient operations of its AsiaOne hub at Subic Bay, Fedex has expressed interest in extending its lease contract up to 2013.

The company, which plans to buy eight more aircraft to beef up its fleet of 12 for its first contract extension in Subic, has also told Ms Macapagal of its interest in tapping the Cebu International Airport for its operations.

Just like Fedex, UPS chose the Philippines because of its strategic location in the region —it is 1.5 hours from Hong Kong, two hours from Taiwan and four hours from Singapore, Japan and South Korea. The proposed link-up between Clark and Subic is also expected to boost traffic in these areas.

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



GRAPHS BY ROBERT B. ANDRES

Peso-Dollar Rate

₱50.16 = $1
As of 5 p.m.,
April 4, 2001

¥126.02 = $1
The US dollar was trading at 126.02 as of 5 p.m., April 4, 2001

GOLD:$259.10/259.60
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AGI buying First Centro

By Doris C. Dumlao

FOOD and beverage group Alliance Global Group Inc. is set to acquire a majority stake in First Centro Inc., developer of the Cebu Cybertown, for P750 million in line with its strategy to diversify into information technology-focused property development.

AGI spokesperson Dina Inting yesterday said the company, which recently received P3.22 billion in fresh equity infusion from two US investment companies, would complete the buy-in after the ongoing audit of First Centro.

First Centro, a medium-sized property developer owned by banker Bobby Guevarra, is among the four companies that applied with the Philippine Stock Exchange for an initial public offering within the year. It was planning to bring up its capital base to about P1 billion to P2 billion via the offering of 270 million shares or 27 percent of total listed shares at P1 to P2 per share.

With the buy-in deal, however, Inting said the IPO would have to be deferred even if the company had already received the go-ahead from the PSE.

"We want to help strengthen the fundamentals of First Centro before going public. We estimate that the company made a net profit of about P50 million in 2000. This, by any standard, is a respectable performance for a real estate company last year," she said.

In a statement, AGI chair George Yang, who also holds the Philippine franchise for fast-food chain McDonald's, said the holding company would make First Centro the company's property development.

First Centro's core asset is Cebu Cybertown, a P12-billion Cebu-based IT project accredited by the Philippine Economic Zone Authority. It is also the developer of several housing projects such as Ambassador Hills, a residential community in Parañaque.

"We believe that this is the most favorable time to invest in the property business. The economy is on a firmer footing and we see increasing signs of renewed investor confidence. The government's priority programs are IT and housing, which are exactly the same areas that First Centro is focusing on. That makes it (the buy-in) a timely and strategic investment," Yang said.

Yang also bared that AGI has earmarked P5 billion for its capital expenditure for the next two years. Of the amount, P1.5 billion will be used in the First Centro's Cybertown project.

Two US companies—American Growers Corp. and California Orchard Growers' Investments Inc.—recently acquired a 14-percent stake in AGI. The investments infused by these firms brought up the company's paid-in capital to P6.45 billion.

AGI is planning to list its shares on the Singapore Stock Exchange as part of its global diversification strategy. It aims to join the ranks of Philippine stocks with dual listing such as Philippine Long Distance Co. (New York Stock Exchange), Ionics EMS Inc. (SGX), Benguet Corp. (Nasdaq) and Philex Gold Inc. (Canada Venture board).

Its subsidiary, Alliance Growers Holdings Inc., recently spent P562.5 million ($12.5 million) to acquire US-based food manufacturer McKester PikNik International Ltd.

AGI, which conducted an initial public offering in early 1998, manufactures products supplied to leading beverage and liquor companies nationwide from its plant in Canlubang, Laguna.

Formerly known as Anglo Watsons Inc., AGI was incorporated on Oct. 12, 1993 to engage in container glass manufacturing. Anglo-Watsons changed its corporate name to Alliance Global Inc. in Aug. 3, 1998 with the entry of Yang as 67-percent stockholder through Yorkshire Holdings Inc.

Lorenzo shipping to issue ₱300M in preferred stocks

CARGO shipping firm Lorenzo Shipping Corp. is planning to raise P300 million to upgrade its fleet and wipe out its foreign debts through the issuance of preferred shares.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday, LSC corporate secretary Arsenio Cabrera Jr. said the company's board of directors has approved an increase in the company's authorized capital to P700 million from P400 million.

The increase in capital will be made through the issuance of 300 million preferred shares at P1 per share. The right to purchase one preferred share will be given to each common share held.

Since the Asian currency turmoil of 1997 and the resulting slump in the local shipping industry, LSC had to embark on a streamlining program to keep itself afloat.

According to LSC documents, the preferred shares will have a term of five years. There will be an option for the shareholder to convert the preferred shares to common shares. In the case of foreign shareholders, however, the conversion will be subject to the 40-percent foreign ownership limitation of utilities.

A sinking fund will be established after the second anniversary of the preferred rights issue and will entail monthly amortization payments programmed to cover the full redemption of the preferred shares upon maturity.

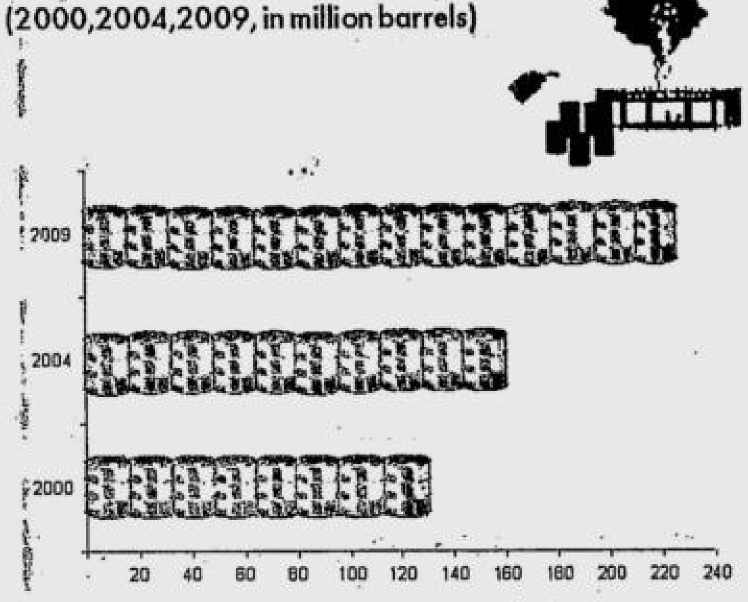
The issuance will carry a dividend rate based on the average 91-day treasury bill rate plus 100 basis points.

INQUIRER MONITOR

Figures that matter in our nation's life

Projected oil demand

(2000,2004,2009, in million barrels)



Source: Department of Energy's "Philippine Energy Plan-2000 to 2009"

Oil demand was projected to grow annually by 6.4 percent from 128.8 million barrels in 2000 to 223.6 million barrels in 2009. Most of the country's oil requirements will be imported.

Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research

DOE plans to tap more renewable energy sources

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE DEPARTMENT of Energy said it would tap more new and renewable energy sources to support a program to energize all barangays in the country by 2004.

"We are optimistic that we will be able to tap more of our potential new and renewable energy sources (such as wind, hydro, solar and biomass) within the next few years," Energy Secretary Jose Isidro N. Camacho yesterday said.

Speaking before a forum hosted by the Ateneo de Manila-based Climate Change Information Center, Camacho said developing NREs was a very important component to the department's energy plan as they are the only viable option to meet the government's rural electrification targets.

As of end-2000, only 80 percent of the country's 42,000 barangays have access to electricity.

Last month, the DOE signed a memorandum of agreement with Japan's Ministry of International Trade and Industry to set up a P33.5-million micro-hydro power project.

Under the plan, a 65-kilowatt-hour micro-hydro power system will be installed in Burauen town in Leyte. The project will provide power to at least 300 households.

The United States Agency for International Development is helping the government identify the various NRE potentials in the country.

USAid recently turned over a renewable energy atlas of the Philippines, which examines the extent of availability, location and quality of wind, hydro, solar and biomass resources in the country.

Patricia Buckles, mission director of USAid, said the agency was interested to help develop and harness the country's NREs.

"We will work with local government units, particularly in off-grid areas, get them more interested in using this kind of technology," she said.

Stocks end flat in thin trade

STOCKS ended flat yesterday after a 2.8-percent decline in market heavyweight Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. weighed down positive sentiment from the Supreme Court again upholding the legitimacy of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's presidency.

Traders said weak sentiment overseas had affected PLDT.

"It seems the Philippines is really a prisoner to the overseas market, particularly the Dow Jones," said Astro del Castillo, research head of A&A Securities.

"But the fall was cushioned by the Supreme Court decision throwing out Estrada's claim on the presidency. This is one big thorn off our back," Del Castillo said.

On Tuesday, the court unanimously rejected deposed President Joseph Estrada's appeal against a ruling declaring Macapagal-Arroyo the lawful president.

The 33-share main index fell 0.11 point, or 0.01 percent, to end at 1,452.15 points. Losers outpaced gainers 31 to 20 with 37 stocks unchanged.

Value traded in the stock market went up to P317.58 million from the previous day's P292.18 million.

"There were mixed results. Meralco B was up 8.9 percent. On the other hand, PLDT was down 2.8 percent. But if you look at value turnover, it's still thin. I guess, the people are still wary of the US market," said Jeanette Yu Tan, analyst at Securities 2000.

On Tuesday, the weakness continued in New York with the Dow Jones Industrial Average falling 292.22 points, or 2.99 percent, to 9,485.71, and the Nasdaq Composite index tumbling 109.97 points, or 6.17 percent, to 1,673.00.

Reuters

Lotto operator buys back shares

LOTTO operator Prime Gaming Philippines Inc. has spent P298 million to buy back its shares at the Philippine Stock Exchange.

In a disclosure yesterday, Prime Gaming said it had purchased a total of 14.9 million shares or 14.97 percent of its outstanding stock in several tranches last month.

Buying back of shares is a usual practice among companies with sufficient retained earnings to boost the market price of their shares, which they believe were undervalued by the market.

Among the companies seen to be actively buying back shares recently are Jollibee Foods Corp., Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc., San Miguel Corp., RFM Corp. and Megaworld Corp.

Prime Gaming said it has been buying back its common shares from the open market using internally generated funds.

The company bought back its shares three times last month at P20 per share.

Prime Gaming was incorporated on Oct. 31, 1924 as Central Azucarera del Pilar, whose principal activity was sugar production. The company later changed its name to Prime Gaming following the entry of the Berjaya Lottery Management through a stock-swap agreement. The principal activity was changed from sugar production to gaming.

Malaysia-based Berroya Lottery Management currently owns 68.5 percent of the company.

As an investment holding company, Prime Gaming, which has total assets of P920 million, has been posting profitable operations owing to high online lottery sales of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office. *Doris C. Dumlao*

Bayantel preparing debt restructuring plan

By Anthony O. Alcantara

BAYAN Telecommunications Inc. will submit to its creditors after the Holy Week a proposal for the restructuring of its $500 million worth of debts.

Eugenio Lopez III, vice chair of Bayantel, yesterday said the company was still preparing the details of its proposal and that the plan would involve possible partnerships with local and foreign companies.

He said there could be possible partnerships "for the LEC (local exchange carrier) side of our business as well as the cellular phone business that the company was planning to go into before year-end."

Last Jan. 16, the company defaulted on the payment of $200 million worth of bonds maturing in 2006 even as it continues to pay interests on its loans.

Bayantel's financial position has been adversely affected by the 1997 Asian financial crisis, the depreciation of the peso and its poor subscriber base.

J. Xavier Gonzales, Benpres Holdings Corp. executive vice president, said in a separate interview that the company has been holding talks with some local phone companies such as Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., Globe Telecom and Digital Telecommunications Philippines Inc. for possible partnerships that could help in the company's debt restructuring.

"There are talks but there is nothing definite yet," he said.

Carlos V. Tria Jr., managing director of the Lopez Group's Integrated Broadband Services, earlier said Bayantel hired Bank of America to help in the restructuring of the debts.

DISCLOSURES

RECORD date of Ayala Corp.'s P0.0125 per share cash dividend for its preferred "B" shares will be on April 23 and payable on April 30.

* * *

PRIME Gaming Philippines Inc. purchased 14.9 million of its own shares at a purchase price of P20 per share.

* * *

ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp. declared a P0.60 per share cash dividend in favor of stockholders of record as of April 25 and shall be payable on or before May 25.

* * *

ELECTED directors to the board of **Bogo-Medellin Milling Co. Inc.** were Andrew Apana, Timothy Bennett, Pedro Francisco Jr., Romeo Ledesma, Lauren Hanson, Elisa Ramos, George Olivar and Alfred Acopan.

* * *

BANK of the Philippine Islands will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on April 19, 9 a.m. at the Grand Ballroom of Hotel Inter-Continental, Makati City. Only stockholders as of March 19 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

* * *

CEBU Holdings Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on April 30, 10 a.m. at the Grand Ballroom of Cebu City Marriott Hotel. Only stockholders as of March 15 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

* * *

ALSONS Cement Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on April 20, 9 a.m. at the New World Hotel, Makati City.

* * *

LEPANTO Consolidated Mining Co. announced that for the month of February, it has produced 12,807 ounces of gold, 244,312 pounds of copper and 52,498 ounces of silver with combined value of P178.9 million.

* * *

ELECTED directors to the board of **Globe Telecom** were Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala II, Lee Shin Koi, Lucas Chow, Lim Chuan Poh, Edward Ying, Delfin Lazaro, Xavier Loinaz, Fernando Zobel de Ayala, Cesar Sison, Gerardo Ablaza Jr. and Rufino Luis Manotok.

Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research

Philippine Stock Exchange

(As of Wednesday, April 4, 2001)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	5.6	5.6	5.5	5.5	43,000
Banco Filipino Sav & Mort	86	86	86	86	100
Bank of the Phil. Islands	69	69.5	69	69	15,100
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	51	52	51	51.5	77,500
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	215	218	214	215	70,970
Philippine National Bank	46.5	46.5	46	46	1,400
Phil. Savings Bank	30	30	30	30	4,000
Security Bank Corp.	19.25	19.25	19.25	19.25	50,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	27.5	29.5	27.5	29.5	48,100
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Bankard Inc.	1.48	1.48	1.48	1.48	85,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	220	250	220	250	780
Manulife Financial Corp.	1230	1230	1220	1230	5,380
Sun Life Financial Serv.	900	915	900	910	3,040
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.		43.5	43.5	43	43
3,000					
Digital Telecom Phils. Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	2,550,000
Piltel	0.53	0.53	0.53	0.53	50,000
Phil. Telegraph & Tel. Co.	0.32	0.32	0.31	0.31	60,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	705	705	690	690	67,000
Philweb.Com Inc.	0.041	0.042	0.04	0.042	77,600,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	43.5	44	42.5	43.5	496,300
Manila Electric Co. B	56	61	55	61	1,191,000
Petron Corp.	1.62	1.68	1.6	1.68	1,970,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	100,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	1.06	1.1	1.04	1.1	1,930,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Union Cement Corp.	0.87	0.87	0.87	0.87	10,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Jollibee Foods Corp.	12	12	12	12	254,300
Pancake House Inc.	1.62	1.68	1.62	1.68	134,000
Pure Foods Corp. A	95	95	95	95	200
RFM Corp.	1.1	1.12	1.1	1.1	667,000
San Miguel Corp. A	46.5	46.5	45.5	45.5	18,900
San Miguel Corp. B	49.5	49.5	48	48	238,200
Universal Robina Corp.	5	5	4.95	5	26,000
Vitarich Corp.	.0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	100,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.57	0.57	0.57	0.57	10,000
Ayala Corp.	7.2	7.3	7.2	7.3	466,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	1.4	1.42	1.4	1.42	107,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	11.75	12	11.75	12	900
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	80,000
A. Soriano Corp.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	10,000
APC Group Inc.	0.16	0.17	0.16	0.17	740,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	2.44	2.44	2.44	2.44	92,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	0.29	0.3	0.29	0.3	170,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	2.26	2.32	2.26	2.26	6,076,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	350,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	100,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1	1.04	1	1.04	372,000
First Phil. Hldgs. Corp.	22	23	22	22.75	109,300
Global Equities Inc	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	2,000,000
Ionics Inc.	10.75	10.75	10.5	10.5	61,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	2.22	2.22	2.16	2.16	790,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.71	0.72	0.69	0.7	5,230,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.47	0.48	0.47	0.48	690,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.5	0.51	0.49	0.5	1,170,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.3	0.31	0.3	0.31	200,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.25	0.26	0.25	0.26	120,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Music Corp.	2.7	2.7	2.65	2.65	130,000
Reynolds Philippine Corp.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	290,000
Central Azucar Don Pedro	0.93	0.93	0.93	0.93	40,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	11.75	12.5	11.75	12.25	39,700
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	0.39	0.41	0.39	0.41	3,440,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.46	0.48	6,910,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.51	0.51	0.51	0.51	1,200,000
Manila Jockey Club	18.25	18.5	18.25	18.5	10,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	43.5	43.5	43.5	43.5	360,600
Equitable PCI Bank-War	3.85	3.95	3.8	3.85	601,000
Omico Corp. Warrant	0.0026	0.0026	0.0026	0.0026	53,000,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series X	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	100
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	8	8	8	8	227,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.5	5.7	5.5	5.7	2,713,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.24	0.25	1,220,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.38	0.38	0.34	0.34	3,020,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.32	0.33	0.32	0.33	2,560,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.92	1.96	1.9	1.96	3,587,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	400,000
SM Development Corp.	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	200,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.7	6.9	6.6	6.9	6,037,000
Universal Rightfield Prop.	0.11	0.11	0.1	0.1	2,770,000
MINING					
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.165	100,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.195	0.195	0.19	0.19	150,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	3,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.17	0.18	0.17	0.17	400,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	200,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	10,000
OIL					
Interport Res.	0.0044	0.0044	0.0044	0.0044	10,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	13,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	3,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	100,000
Pacifica	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	1,000,000

	SHARES	VALUE (P)
Banks & Fin Svc	404,370	32,729,130.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	172,858,500	218,381,030.00
PRO	22,507,000	65,990,100.00
Mining	3,860,000	172,950.00
OIL	27,100,000	147,200.00
GRAND TOTALS:	226,729,870	317,420,410.00

AVERAGES

Banks & Fin Svc	599.79	UP 0.39
Comm'l & Ind'l	1,953.53	DOWN 6.60
PRO	568.92	UP 14.90
Mining	1,103.39	DOWN 15.22
OIL	1.56	DOWN 0.02
All Shares Index	724.77	DOWN 4.03
Composite	1,452.15	DOWN 0.11

NO. OF ADVANCES: 20; NO. OF DECLINES: 31; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 37;
NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 88; NO. OF TRADES: 2,025

CURRENCIES

April 4, 2001

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	1.114454	1.000000	49.7430
Japan	Yen	0.008879	0.007967	0.3963
United Kingdom	Pound	1.597570	1.433500	71.3066
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.142880	0.128206	6.3774
Switzerland	Franc	0.654637	0.587406	29.2193
Canada	Dollar	0.705887	0.633392	31.5068
Singapore	Dollar	0.614871	0.551724	27.4444
Australia	Dollar	0.516771	0.463699	23.0658
Bahrain	Dinar	2.956270	2.652661	131.9513
Kuwait	Dinar	N/A	N/A	N/A
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.297164	0.266645	13.2637
Brunei	Dollar	0.612506	0.549602	27.3389
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000107	0.000096	0.0048
Thailand	Baht	0.024711	0.022173	1.1030
UAE	Dirham	0.303426	0.272264	13.5432
Korea	Won	0.000831	0.000746	0.0371
Euro	Euro	1.000000	0.897300	44.6344
Germany	Mark	0.511292	0.458782	22.8212
France	Franc	0.152450	0.136793	6.8045
Netherlands	Guilder	0.453780	0.407177	20.2542
Austria	Schilling	0.072672	0.065209	3.2437
Belgium	Franc	0.024789	0.022243	1.1064
Italy	Lire	0.000516	0.000463	0.0230
Finland	Markka	0.168188	0.150915	7.5070
Portugal	Escudo	0.004988	0.004476	0.2226
Spain	Peseta	0.006010	0.005393	0.2683
Luxemburg	Franc	0.024789	0.022243	1.1064
Ireland	Punt	1.269738	1.139336	56.6740

Asian business leaders to map out blueprint

SINGAPORE—Asian business leaders and investors began meeting here yesterday to map out a corporate governance blueprint for the region, which faces renewed economic threats from the slowdown of the US and Japanese economies.

The importance of reforms in the corporate sector was heightened by the specter of the US economic slump, said Seiichi Kondo, deputy secretary general of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

"The severity of the US slowdown remains to be seen. But the arguments for reforms in Asia remain strong," he told the conference.

The high-powered three-day gathering—organized by the OECD, the World Bank and Asian Development Bank—will consider a proposed reform agenda to be submitted to governments, private groups and international organizations.

"Money finds its way into investments that bring the highest return, irrespective of the world economic situation," Kondo said.

But when economic conditions were less than favorable "corporate governance becomes even more important than ever, not only to attract foreign investment but to ensure that it stays."

Kondo said delegates would focus on a draft White Paper outlining a blueprint for improving corporate governance in the region.

The reform agenda was designed 'to guide companies, policymakers, regulators and law enforcers, he said. *AFP*

Asean finance officials search for consensus on money swaps

KUALA LUMPUR—Senior finance officials from Southeast Asia met yesterday to search for a consensus on creating a regional web of currency swaps to ward off future financial crises.

The three-day meeting is expected to throw up alternative solutions to problems plaguing the implementation of the currency swap plan, known as the Chiang Mai Initiative after the Thai city where it was conceived last year.

The plan envisages linking international reserves of the 10 countries from the Association of South East Asian Nations with those of China, South Korea and Japan.

The scheme is being discussed at a time when the currencies of many countries in the region have fallen sharply, some to Asian crisis levels.

Plan members, who saw their economies battered by speculative attacks on their currencies in 1997-1998 amid big balance of payments problems, could borrow from the swap network.

But the initiative envisages tying disbursements under the scheme to reforms supervised by the International Monetary Fund, a proposal Malaysia staunchly opposes.

Malaysia, an ardent supporter of regional monetary cooperation, says negotiations have reached a critical stage but foresees extra time being needed to fine-tune the arrangements.

The country, which balked at IMF assistance during the Asian economic crisis of 1997-1998, says there is no role for the Washington-based institution in the regional currency plan.

"The time taken to disburse loans or assistance under IMF arrangement is long and sometimes too late," a Malaysian official told Reuters.

The official said Indonesia and Thailand would have been better off if the IMF had been faster in delivering the bailout packages.

Malaysia did not turn to the IMF for financial help during the Asian crisis. Its radical approach of imposing capital controls and pegging its currency at 3.8 ringgit to the US dollar to ward off speculative attacks on its foreign exchange and stock markets helped it to recover faster than its neighbors.

"Our success shows that 'one size doesn't fit all.' Sometimes policy prescriptions have to be country specific," the Malaysian official said.

Potential creditor nations, especially Japan, have stressed that the swaps would not be activated until IMF programs were already in place or were at the point of being finalized.

Only in cases where a member country was deemed to be suffering a passing cash crunch could the swap deal be triggered without a link to an IMF program. In such a case, a country could borrow no more than up to 10 percent of the swap line.

Malaysian officials cite the IMF's loan facility, the Contingent Credit Lines, which allows the release of one-third of total line of pre-set credit provided to a country without any conditions.

"We also have a $2.5-billion swap line under the Miyazawa Initiative with Japan. There are no conditionalities in that," the Malaysian official said.

Malaysian officials say there is no need for any IMF surveillance of reforms undertaken by the regional economies. *Reuters*

Leader paints gloomy picture of Thai economy

BANGKOK—Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra has portrayed Thailand's economy as crippled by public debt, shrinking exports and sick banking and real estate sectors in a gloomy televised address to the nation.

Despite the grim outlook, Thaksin said his government was ready to tackle the problems and urged the public to support its efforts to finally shake off the legacy of the 1997-1998 economic crisis.

"I told you about all these facts because we have a collective burden. The government has a burden and so do the people. But we will talk to solve the problem together," he said in a speech aired late Tuesday.

Thailand's ever-weakening stock market slipped further in morning trade Wednesday as investors found little encouragement in the prime minister's assessment of economic factors that were already well known.

Analysts said there was little cheer on the bourse amid Thaksin's gloomy portrayal of the economy, a court case under way over corruption allegations that could cost him his job and the baht's slide to three-year lows.

Among the many issues casting a pall over the economy were a mountain of non-performing loans in the banking sector, dwindling reserves, a sagging property market, unemployment and the moribund bourse.

Thaksin said one of the most troubling indicators was Thailand's staggering public debt, standing at 2.8 trillion baht ($62 billion), or 57.6 percent of gross domestic product, which could hinder investment in development projects.

The government has set aside 115 billion baht to pay down public debt in 2002, which includes 90 billion baht allocated for interest payments and 20 billion to begin whittling away the principal, he said. *AFP*

Malaysia's trade surplus widens as imports fall

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia—Malaysia's trade surplus in February widened compared to a year earlier but mostly because of a fall in imports, which indicated manufacturers were worried about the US economic slowdown.

The February trade surplus amounted to 6.5 billion ringgit ($1.7 billion), well above the 4.9 billion ringgit ($1.3 billion) recorded a year earlier, the statistics agency said yesterday.

The figures were also far above economists' average expectation of a 3.2-billion-ringgit ($842-million) surplus.

The surplus was wider mostly due to a broader-than-expected gap between exports and imports. While export growth rose by 4.6 percent to 28.5 billion ringgit ($7.5 billion), imports fell by 1.3 percent to 22.1 billion ringgit ($5.8 billion).

The data indicate Malaysian manufacturers are becoming apprehensive of slowing global demand for electronics. Over half of Malaysia's exports are composed of electrical and electronic products, while the bulk of imports are for intermediate goods used in the manufacturing sector.

February's on-year decline in imports points to expectations of fewer export orders to come in the near future. In December, export growth contracted by 11.4 percent and expanded again in January by 10.3 percent.

Curbed imports of intermediate goods by manufacturers is a clear sign of lower expectations for production and demand. *AP*

Japan to order banks to dispose of bad loans

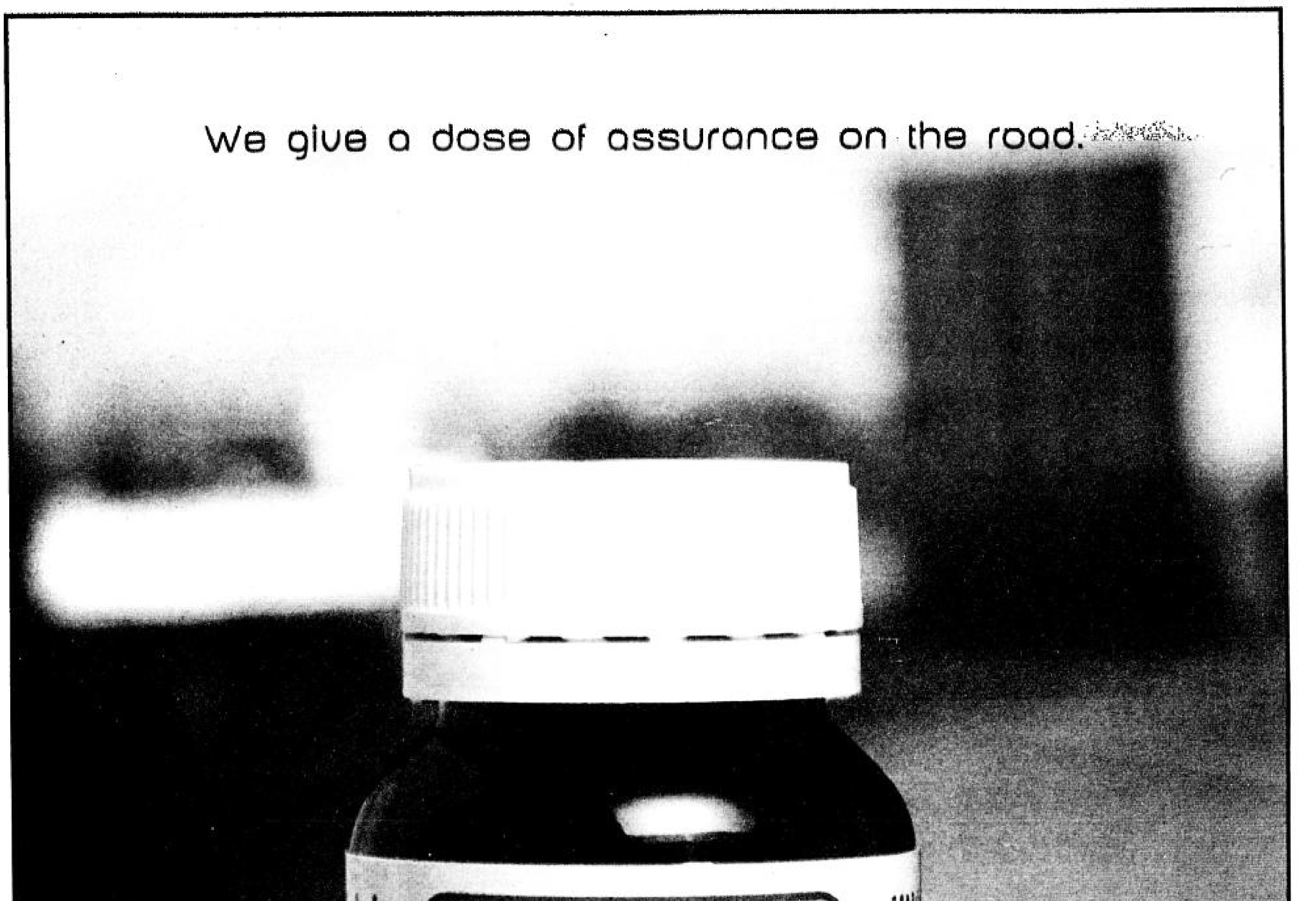
TOKYO—Japan's ruling coalition agreed Wednesday to require banks to dispose of their riskiest loans in two years, but the parties did not unveil a broad economic stimulus package that had been expected.

Shizuka Kamei, policy chief of Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party, said that the LDP and its coalition partners were unable to reach a decision on when to submit needed legislation to Parliament. A final decision on the emergency economic package was now expected Friday, he said.

The deadline on writing off bad loans—a key part of the package—is meant to force Japanese banks to clean up a financial mess that has crippled the world's second-largest economy since stock and property prices collapsed in the early 1990s.

Banks would have two years to dispose of loans that were least likely to be repaid and three years to clear newly soured loans, Economy Minister Taro Aso said Wednesday.

The Nihon Keizai newspaper estimated the size of the most problematic loans to be 12.7 trillion yen ($101.08 billion). *AP*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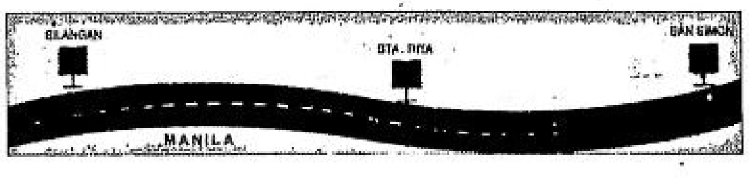

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LIPAT BAHAY 713-0878/716-9177

LIPAT BAHAY 824-1227

•LIPAT•731-6833

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

COMML/RESDL

KALOOCAN

Caloocan UP 32bm² Hse w/3 Stry 9283267

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

COMML/RESDL

MANDALUYONG

•Nr Vergara St P4M LA250• 3BR FA180 DBO 7215226

QUEZON CITY

Kamias w/Comm'l Units 600m² 15M 9283267

Mayon QC w/6 Units 480m² 22T/m² 9283267

Nr. Morato 7 Units Apt. 690m² 25T/m² 9283267

Nr. Retiro Banawe 267m² w/Hse 7M Nice 9283267

Panay QC 1000m² w/2 Hse 2Stry Bung 26T/m² 9283267

SAN JUAN

Annapolis GHills Office 148m² 3CR 5M neg 9119916

HOUSE & LOT

ALABANG

Alabang Hills 3BR LA450 Den Nice P10M • 533-5525

LAS PINAS

Auburn Bnew 2Stry 3br 2tb 2.2M Terms 8726951

BFR 3br 2tb 1.8M 3br 2tb 2.5M 8726951 / 8723140

BFR Bnew Cor. 2Stry 4br 4tb 2.9M 8726951

LAS PINAS/ BACOOR 2-4 BRS,Cash or Term 874-0486 • 874-0487 873-5949 • 874-2175

MAKATI

Holiday Inn Eaton Makati Good Income • 928-1469

Magallanes Subd 4BR MQ LA367 FA320 • 643-5313

DASMA-1679m² 5BR 4TB Pool @78m 8440130 Rosie

MANILA

Capt. Ticong - 419m² nr Sch 2sty P12.5M 8440130

L. Guinto 323m² 2Stry 3br Nr Sch @11M 8440130

L.Guinto - 323m² 2sty 3BR 3car grge P11M 8440130

MARIKINA

Good Buy @ 2.2M nice LA240 Rancho Est. III 8253244

Good Buy @ 8.5M very nice Tri-Lev LA600 Big pool 8253244

Grnlnd bnew 3br 2M 9487112

PARANAQUE

Sunvalley Paranaque 4BRS 3TB near Toyota 8509507

T.S. Cruz 240m² P4M 6324423 8-5:30 (Off); 8071317 (Res) CRISTY

PASIG

**Kawilihan Pasig P10M Cor. 3Br Call 671-4421

**Kawilihan Pasig Duplex P7.8M Neg. 671-4421

Pasig City H&L A-250m² P2.5M • 534-6610 Jojo

VALLE VERDE Rush9126833

QUEZON CITY

Acropolis 300-330m² P17-20M 4BR 2Sty 6337601-03

Samat St w/ 5Stry Bldg 600m² SMH w/Hse 9298378

D. Tuazon St SMH QC 411m² 2Stry 928-1469

Baler St. Q.C. LA=3000m² WHse 18T/m² • 928-1469

Mayon St SMH QC A-960m² 534-6610 • 818-8569 Jojo

Mira Nila QC 354FA 5br 5t&b 3stry 150LA 6.9M 9289714/9279609/4632899

Nr Ateneo FA315 LA269 H'O Ok w/View 12M 6453731

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

HOUSE & LOT

QUEZON CITY

Sikatuna Bung LA412 4br FA250 8.5M Nice 6453731

UP Village QC Old House LA400m² 6-8M • 533-5525

SAN JUAN

Greenhills Cor Only P38M 6714421 / 09175279121

PROVINCIAL

Baguio House & Lot Good Location 531-3742

Tagaytay 249.5M 2Stry B-new Call 928-1469

1Hectares Bulacan Rdy 4 Piggery P3.5M 9281469

Tagaytay L286m² 2sty Bnew 9281469 • 4534877

OTHER AREAS

CanyonWoods Btngas 7.5M ownrlvng neg0917-8143792

•LAGUNA BEL-AIR 3• LA120m² up 2-3BR w/prkg Joann 912-5775

LOT

KALOOCAN

Deparo Caloocan City 5Tm² VLot P3500/m² 928-1469

LAS PINAS

BFR Rush 414 5T 526 5.2 5T 343 5.5ST 169 8726951

BFRV nr Abel Mosce 169m² 6,500/m² • 874-7234

MANILA

A. Mabini VAC LOT 488m² @P50K/m² 8440130 Rosie

A.Mabini - Vac. Lot. 488m² @60K/m² nice 8440130

SAMPALOC front UST9126833

Vito Cruz 909m² @ 50K/m² VL nr Stadium 8440130

MANDALUYONG

9 de Pebrero Near Shaw A-1500m² • 534-6610 Jojo

MARIKINA

Marikina East 814m² VAC Mor Sun 16K/m² 8440130

PARANAQUE

5door-apt nr UST 9126833

Tahanan-Vac Lot 280sqm @12K/sqm • 844-0130

Maywood 288m² VAC LOT @7500/m² 8440130

•MAYWOOD 288m² VL P7500/m² 888-5007

V/L Multi-Natl 2Lots 615ea Main Rd Cheap 6435313

QUEZON CITY

**Only P1.3M Leland Dr. Novaliches 671-4421

**Neopolitan Ph6 P4500/m² 300m² w/Fence 671-4421

2.5Has Resdl Lot Ideal Twnhse Devt QC 937-1536

4.5Has Resdl VL Cheap Diliman QC • 937-1536

Katipunan 802m² 9119916

Nr New York 400m² 20T Neg No Flood 6453731

QC 15th Ave 500m² 25T Neg Facing East 6453731

Tandang Sora QC L-1640m² P16T/m² • 928-1469

RIZAL

300m² Palos Verdes Antipolo Very Cheap • 937-1536

Antipolo V/L w/fruit trees 5300m² w/old Hse 6435313

Taytay 1H Tikling 3.3/2 Nice Flat w'Road 6453731

Village East Binangonan 203m² cor. 5313742

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

LOT

PROVINCIAL

**Pampanga 27H Alng Mc Arthur H-way 220/m² 681-2457

Angat Bulacan Farm Lot 18Has @250m² 872-0470

Baguio Subd. LOT w/Pine Trees Tel. 5313742

CALAMBA HILLS SUB-DIV. MAYAPA, CALAMBA, LAGUNA CORNER LOT 311m² NEAR SCHOOL 09192800275

Colbella Homes Tanauan Batangas 3Lots 5313742

Fort Magsaysay 18Has Resd'l P450m² 5313742

Grand Victoria N. Ecija 4 Lots 5313742

Malinta Bul 7049m² VLot Along Hi-way • 928-1469

San Pablo Farm Lot 2.1HA P600/sqm • 842-1571

Tagaytay Country Homes I 135m² 3,200/m² 9283267

TAGAYTAY PROPERTIES House & Lots • 681-2457

Tagaytay Royale w/Share 447m² Cor Lot 6337601-03

Tagaytay w/View 5802sqm P2000/sqm • 633-7601-03

Villa Segovia Sta Rosa 2 corner LOTS 5313742

OTHER AREAS

Mla Swoods 580m² 9126833

14523sqm Tanza Cavite CLN TITLE P475/sqm 8953772

EAGLE RIDGE Rush9126833

CONDO/TWNHSE/APT

MAKATI

**Rockwell 3 Units 2Brs Fast Selling 671-4421

3 Salcedo 3Br 9155177

Beautiful FF 3BR Cond. Skyland Mkt w/Parking 4 Sale 6.2M Tel. • 533-9776

Cityland 8 Studio 22sqm Furn Tel 750T call Elsa 531-4590 or 0917-8479787

Colonade Legaspi Village 3BR 3TB 9.5M 915-5177

Makati 2-3BR P3.8M Cash/Terms Call 533-5525

REGENCY 3BRs Brand New 2Salcedo 3BRs 2Carparks LPL MANOR 1BR Furn P20T CITILAND 8 Studio Furn QUESTAR 2BR 2TB P20T nr La Salle 1BR Furn P10T PACIFIC PLACE 8 Units 3BRs Furn T-8509507

MANDALUYONG

GUEVENTVILLE II CONDO 2.2M 4BR 2TB 2 Garage Libertad St., Mand. City. Mr. Tang • BP-150-315620 Cellphone • 0919-6230388

Various Wack-Wack Condo Lee Gardens 5346610 Jojo

PARANAQUE

Paranaque City LA68m² 3BRs P3M • 533-5525

PASIG

**Renaissance Ortigas 1-3Br Rush Sale 6812457

•TEKTITE 111M² 4.5M Rush 110m²@280/m² 412-1825

Emerald Mansion 3BR 6M w/ 1Carpk Call 412-1825

Office Condo Ortigas 38Th /m² Cell 09174149898

Renaissance Tower Meralco Ave. 634-8160

QUEZON CITY

Cubao Condo 1.3M EZTerm 9126976 9132224 4381480

**Blueridge Like Bnew 250m² 3Br 2Cg 671-4421

Condo Unit Heroes Hill Q C 634-8160

El Jardin Bohol Ave QC 2 Studios 1Cg Call 916-5177

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

CONDO/TWNHSE/APT

QUEZON CITY

A Modern Office - Residential Condominium ONE BEATRIZ TOWER Lawan St., A. Blvd. Cubao nr Ateneo, UP, PSBA, NCBA Complete Amenities P1M &up P50TD/P 3yrs 0% or P15,500 for 5 years **FREE GIVEAWAYS! Cellphones Cabinet Rangehood MOVERS DEV'T & MKTG. 9120876/4334162/4331073

Kamias 3Dr 12M 9155177

Nr Ateneo LA72 FA149 3br 2tb Nr Nice 6453731

Scout Thses 4-7M Nice 3Stry 9283267 9283267

Narra Hts1 3BR 2TB 1CG 125m² 915-5177 641-9346

SAN JUAN

Annapolis Greenhills 2-3 BR 7-8M 9283267

Nr G'Hills LA67 FA200 3br 7M 2Cg Nice 6453731

One Beverly Place 7.2M 3br mq pkg 157m² 6435313

VARIOUS AREAS

Makati/Ortigas 300-1500m² Ready to Use • 533-5525

MEMORIAL LOT

**Heritage Park Now Open Lawn Estates 671-4421

Loyola Mkn 35T 8386652/45

RESORT

**BF Resort Vill Las Pinas 276m² @ 5500 8749075

CLUB SHARE & MEMBERSHIP

Fontana Share 200T 9283267 / 141210187

FACTORY/WHSE

San Juan 1573m²whse off@ 23K/m² 8440130

**Ugong Bul Whse L3774 Tel 9281469 / 4534877

FARM/FISHPEN

21Has Mango Orchard & Resort Bataan • 937-1536

REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

APARTMENT

MANILA

ERMITA 1BR 5th FLR T3022650

MANDALUYONG

APT w/Grge Tel 7T 5357293

QUEZON CITY

Cubao 2sty 2BR 9982547

PROVINCIAL

Baguio Green VA 4164495

HOUSE

MAKATI

SANLO 3BR 5268048

SANLO 3BR T#5268048/49

CONDO/TWNHSE

MAKATI

Crown Tower Salcedo VIII 2BR 163sqm FF w/Pkg. Mds Rm. P65T/mo. 896-6665

REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

CONDO/TWNHSE

MANILA

P5,500/mo.Malate Call 522-6648 / 926-4070

QUEZON CITY

3BR 2TB 13T 4310585

SAN JUAN

Eisenhower Comm'l Unit 83.80m² 5313742

VARIOUS AREAS

Makati/Ortigas 2-3BRs 122-300m² 25T-85T 533-5525

FOR LEASE

1-3 Hec P50-70/m² With Bldg Cell 0917-4149898

VACANT LOT FOR RENT LONG TERM OR SHORT TERM AREA: 4,394 sq meter LOCATION: STO. NINO MEYCAUAYAN BULACAN AREA: 325 sq. meter LOCATION: CALOOCAN CITY AREA: 216 sq. meter LOCATION: CALOOCAN CITY PLS. CALL AT 366-81-66 Cell# 0917-9942188 LOOK FOR ADONIS

ROOM & BOARD

Boarder.nr. La Salle 8992148

Free H2O & light 8992148

LADIES Mktl. 7898246 Ana

Mktl Apartel 500-700/day 3T-4.2T/wk ful/fur 8995386

BEDSPACE

Mkt Condo M/F Food/prkg 8905331

BUSINESS RENTAL

**Antel Global 142m² 350/m² Call 6812457

P1800/monthly Malate T-400-6420/23 Sn Pedro Lag. 8086006/07

**JMT BLdg 318m² at 280/m² Call 6812457

**Taipan Ortigas 129m² Call 681-2457

**Tektite 101m² Up at 300/m² Call 6812457

1MagMile Ofc Ort Ctr Nice 61.4m² 15Flr 6317166

2/F Comm'l/Office Space for Rent 217sqm 78 Jup St Mkti Ave Call:8951368or8951733

CITIBANK 284m² 8th Floor Lions Rd.near Makati 300m² Office Warehouse w/2Tels Call 850-9507

Makati Office Space 195m² 500/m² • 533-5525

MALATE OFFICES 5268048

P380/m² 517m² MAKATI 100% GENERATOR BACK-UP MR. TANG TEL. 6714532/41 CP-0919-6230388

RIZAL

Pasig Market Plaza Cart 8-100sqm Ofc 6417760-61

RESORT

PansolHotSpring Prvt 776-7607

TRANSPORTATION FOR SALE

CARS

FORD

FORD EXPLR Red/Tan Lthr Intr P1.25M 850-6032 • 0918-9041996

Ranger US ver. 4x4 9126976

HONDA

Honda CBX 400cc T-3635865

HYUNDAI

94 GRACE P205 731-3492

98 GRACE P258 731-3492

TRANSPORTATION FOR SALE

CARS

HYUNDAI

98 PREGIO P340 731-3492

KIA

94 BESTA P180 731-3492

98 BESTA P258 731-3492

MERCEDES

98 MB100D P390 731-3492

MB 126 Body See 2 apprcte • 634-8160

MITSUBISHI

96Lncr GLXi 243T A/T 8382015

97' Strada 4x4 9243301

S-Wagon Acq.'93 634-8160

NISSAN

98 Cefiro Elite A1 A/T 19Tkms 780K 8420343 DBO

SAFARI '97 loaded 9124428

TOYOTA

CRLLA '97 GLI A/T 9126976

MOTORCYCLE

Big bikes Honda VFR 750 cc Yamaha Vmax 1200 3635865

TRANSPORTATION FOR RENT

CARS FOR RENT

L3•Cars• 9273453 4538295

Starex, L300, Coaster Bus Cars 637-7396 • 631-3496

CAR VANS 413-5383

Bnew HiAce 6336754 9100893

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H-100 Van/Honda 920-7360

IT/ Hiace 9136710/4333682

L300 T 4161105 / 7411356

L300 VV (Roger) 578-8917

MB 100 Van 643-7397

SELFDRIVE-New Cars & Vans, Daily or Long Term ABC-5368822/3039789

STAREX L3 9121809/7268388

U Drive Cars Vans 8006595

VAN 12-15 STR. 8257135

Car Vans 4535288/9296250

WANTED TO BUY

We Buy Cars Cash 6718191

CAR LOAN

2% w/oTaking Car 3732083

2% w/oTaking Car 3646928

2% w/oTaking Car 7221021

2% w/o taking car 7262780

GENERAL ITEMS FOR SALE

BAKERY EQUIPMENT

Ice Crusher Shaver Other Kitchen Equip T-9981170

PETS

Lab/Choco 3mo/10T 9331434

SPORTING GOODS

Billiard 23T 25T & 30T New Accept C.Card • 781-9453

STRIKEMASTER Bowling & Billiards Sales & Rentals T-9341569

ACCOUNTANT

(Contractual for one year with possibility of permanent hiring)

Applicant:

- Must be a CPA with familiarity of Audit procedures (both COA and Private)
- Above average written and oral English
- Impeccable trust record for honesty and integrity
- Pleasant personality with good public relations and inter personal relations abilities
- Computer literate
- Salary P20,000 a month

Send complete Bio-data, preferably with references to:

Philippine Sugar Millers Association, Inc.
1402 Security Bank Centre
6776 Ayala Avenue, Makati City 1226

WANTED

Subcontractor

for Foreign Assisted Projects for Bicol and Mindanao Areas with the ff:

- ➢ Complete Manpower and Equipments for Road Works
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Submit Prequalification docs at P.O. Box 1169, Quezon City Central Post Office, NIA Road, Diliman, Quezon City 151

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2600 Legarda Street, Sampaloc, Manila

NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice is hereby given to the public that the following stock certificates of SVJ Farms, Inc. were lost

STOCK CERT. NO.	IN THE NAME OF	NO. OF SHARES
001	Atty. Serafin Villanueva, Jr.	640
002	Alice M. Villanueva	640
003	Ma. Rosario M. Villanueva	600
004	Ma. Regina M. Villanueva	600
005	Lourdes L. Villanueva	20
006	Atty. Serafin L. Villanueva	3,750
007	Alice M. Villanueva	3,750
008	Atty. Serafin L. Villanueva	1,750
009	Alice M. Villanueva	2,000
010	Ma. Rosario M. Villanueva	1,750
011	Ma. Regina M. Villanueva	1,750
012	Alice M. Villanueva	390
013	Ma. Rosario M. Villanueva	1,000
014	Ma. Regina M. Villanueva	1,000
015	Antonio Cabral, Jr.	390
016	Atty. Serafin L. Villanueva	10
017	Ma. Rosario V. Cabral	1,190
018	Ma. Regina Villanueva	1,190
019	Vicente Geolingo	5
020	Atty. Serafin Villanueva	5
021	Jose Manuel L. Villanueva	21
022	Ma. Regina Villanueva	596
023	Rosario V. Cabral	596
024	Antonio A. Cabral, Jr.	388

After the expiration of one year from the date of the last publication of this notice and no contest has been presented, new certificates will be issued by the corporation to the shareholder as above stated.

(PDI – Mar 22 29 & Apr 5, 2001)

GENERAL ITEMS FOR SALE

WANTED TO BUY

B/SELL FUL PD EDUC PLAN 7137284•09177939632

BUYING ROLEX others, High Price CASH CALL 09178142309/7269687

Buy / Sell / Pawn / Repair ROLEX Tel# 804-0484 • 834-2886

Buy/Pawn Diamonds T8342886

MISCELLANEOUS

Purified Water P22/Bottle Min 25Bottles T#531-4267

Yamaha XJR 1200 cc 194 P250T Yamaha Majesty T-3635865

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

MALE

Exp. Taxi Driver 635-3503

Architect M 2-4yrs Exp. Licensed 9289714 9279609

FEMALE

ACCOUNTING CLERK 7336420/7335177

F ESCORT 18-23 attractive open-minded 1277-05080

Maid 4 Foreigner 726-1266

MAIDS DIRECT HIRE 7284971

Masseuse, Aerobics / Gym Intructress, Life Guard Mila 646-1118 lme 892-2759

Sewers Trimmers Tel 7411912 ; 7422820

WANTED: (1) Female NURSE; (2) MIDWIVES; (1) Female MEDICAL SECRETARY •18-25 yrs. old. Single. Apply personally at 1748 Dian St. Barangay Palanan, Makati City, 9:00 am-4:00pm

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

MALE/FEMALE

CARE GIVER T5280722

★ IMMIGRATE ★ LIVE and WORK in Canada Australia 8175511/8944950

Office Staff 9134470 RL

PUBLIC NOTICES

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

•EARN FR HOME 8531008•

ELECTION/PROMO Beach Golf Umbrella Pens Mugs T-shirt W'clock 532-3909

★ Organic Fertilizer ★ dealership 8175511 8944950

JUICE DRINK MAKING BUSS. FREE DEMO 2553584/2537617

RTW Cash/Consign 373-8821

T-SHIRT SALE TEL4383147

WOORI NARA CORPORATION Open for DEALERSHIP Korean Red Ginseng. Pls. call (043)7572222; Fax (043) 7572121

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of ISAGANI GAN SAYO was extrajudicially settled by his heirs per Doc. No. 955; Page No. 26; Book No. 26; Series of 2000 of Notary Public Amador C. Casino of Makati City(PDI-Mar. 29, Apr. 5 & 11,2001)

NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice of loss of ICR# 032503 issued to Muamar Surawidarto on 12/23/99

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MA. ELVIRA (MEL) LUCIANO, T.O.P.

PAPAL AWARDEE "PRO ECLESIA ET PONTIFICE"
OF
MAGALANG, PAMPANGA AND SAN JUAN, METRO MANILA

Her loving sisters-in-law, nieces, nephews, adopted priests and nuns and recipients of her generosity kindly request the pious reader to pray for the eternal repose of their beloved MAMA MEL.

Her remains lie in state at the Shrine of Our Lady of Mount Carmel on Broadway Street, Quezon City and will be transported to Magalang, Pampanga on Thursday, 05 April, 2001, where she will be interred on Saturday 07 April 2001 after the 9:00 AM Mass at the San Bartolome Church.

In Loving Memory

on the

First Death Anniversary

of

MARCELO S. BALATBAT

Who passed away on April 5, 2000

Holy Masses will be offered today at 7:15 a.m. at the Santuario de San Jose, Greenhills, Mandaluyong City.

We, members of Marcelo's family, request all his loved ones, relatives, friends and pious readers to join us in prayer for him.

We would like to thank everyone, who in any way or another, became a part of Marcelo's meaningful life.

Paciencia Reyes Mercado, MD

Died in the Grace of our Lord
on April 3, 2001 at the age of 86.

Her dearest husband, **Pabling**; children **Roly, Tito, Eddie, Cherry** and **Peachy**; sons and daughters-in-law, grandchildren and great grandchildren, other relatives and friends request the readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Mount Carmel Church, Broadway, New Manila, Quezon City.

Holy Mass and Services are scheduled at 7:00 P.M. Wednesday, April 4 through Friday, April 6, 2001.

Cremation Services will be on Saturday, April 7, 2001 at 8:00 A.M. at the Loyola Memorial Chapels, Guadalupe, Makati.

ATTY. ERNESTO E. DE LEON

(January 24, 1930 - April 4, 2001)
at the age of 71.
Son of **Jorge de Leon** (Deceased) & **Herminia Esguerra de Leon.**

His loving wife **Babes de Leon**; his beloved children **L.C., MARC, CIRO, ROMMEL, AWIN, EDITH, ERIC**; grandchildren; sisters **Rosalina** and **Clarita.**

His remains lie in state at Bahay Carmelo Project 6, Quezon City. Funeral Mass shall be on April 7, 2001 at 2:00 p.m. at Mount Carmel, Project 6, Quezon City followed by Cremation at Loyola Crematorium, Marikina City at 4:00 p.m.

> I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies, and whoever believes in Me will never die.
>
> John 11:25-26

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

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and bank-to-bank payments

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS: ❶ Copy of Death Certificate ❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT • MESSAGE OF THANKS • DEATH ANNIVERSARY • REQUIEMS • FREE OBIT DESIGN

For the needs of your departed Loved Ones the following establishments can help you.

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Tels. 640-2145 • 640-2975
CAPITOL MEMORIAL CHAPELS INC.
1305 G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City
Tel. 732-0309; 732-1095
CEBU ROLLING HILLS MEMORIAL CHAPELS INC.
Cebu Branch: A.S. Fortuna Street, Banilad
Mandaue City, Cebu Tels. 346-2543; 346-2601
COSMOPOLITAN FUNERAL HOMES, INC.
Nivel Hills, Lahug, Cebu City Tels. 231-0721; 231-3192
COSMOPOLITAN FUNERAL HOMES, INC.
Camus Ext. cor. J. Abad Santos, Davao City
Tels. (082) 227-1201; 227-1258
DON BOSCO CHAPELS
Pasay Road, Makati City
Tel. 894-5932 to 34

DULCE MEMORIAL SERVICES
Jose Abad Santos Ave. cor. Dinalupihan St.
Manuguit, Manila
Tels. 712-5102; 741-5125; 741-5133
Fax No. 711-3064
FLORESCO FUNERAL HOME
219 Gen. Luna St., Concepcion, Malabon Metro Manila
Tels. 2812963; 2813034; 2810522
FUNERARIA PANGILINAN
Santo Entierro cor. P. Burgos St. Lourdes Sur, Angeles City
Tels. (045) 322-5247 ; (045) 888-2959
GARDEN OF MEMORIES MEMORIAL PARK
Calsadang Bago, Pateros, Metro Manila
Tels. 642-6181 to 82
HOLY TRINITY MEMORIAL CHAPELS
Sucat, Parañaque City Tels. 825-1296; 825-1291
LA FUNERARIA LAWRENCE BAQUIRAN
#27 Crisologo St., Vigan, Ilocos Sur
Tel. 722-2730; Cell (0917) 5680136 ; (0917) 5680145
Manila #23 Pato St., Project 2, Quezon City Tel. 434-3258

LA FUNERARIA PAZ, INC.
1501 C.M. Recto Ave. cor. T. Mapua, Manila
Tels. 711-6931 to 35; 732-4795
LA FUNERARIA PAZ, INC.
143 G. Araneta Ave. cor. Kaliraya St., Quezon City
Tels. 749-3806 to 11
LA FUNERARIA PAZ, INC.
79 Naguilian Rd., Baguio City Tel. (074) 443-3337
LOYOLA MEMORIAL CHAPELS
EDSA cor. Bernardino St., Guadalupe, Makati City
Tel. 895-1011 to 19
MARIAN MEMORIAL CHAPELS
Marcos Hiway, Antipolo, Rizal
Tels. 645-1855; 682-0209; 682-0210
NACIONAL MEMORIAL HOMES
264 G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City
Tels. 713-5231 to 35; 714-0867; 714-0868
ROLLING HILLS MEMORIAL CHAPELS INC.
Ground Flr. Rolling Hills Chapel, 27th-Lacson St.
Mandalagan, Bacolod City
Tel. 433-7132

RIZAL FUNERAL HOMES
438 Cementina St., Pasay City
Tels. 831-1204
SANTUARIO DE SAN JOSE PARISH
East Greenhills, Mandaluyong City
Telefax 724-4139; 725-2044
ST. ALPHONSUS MARY DE LIGOURI PARISH
Magallanes Village, Makati City
Tels. 852-8228; 852-7284
ST. MARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL
16-15 G. Tuazon cor. Loreto St., Sampaloc, Manila
Tels. 749-3679; 781-1772
ST. PETER FUNERAL HOMES
296 Quezon Ave., Quezon City
Tels. 372-5084; 410-9286 / 87
VERONICA MEMORIAL HOMES
Official NBI Morgue
517-A Arnaiz St., Pasay City
Tels. 831-3797; 844-7846; 843-1801; 845-4836
MT. SINAI MEMORIAL CHAPEL
Arellano St., Dagupan City
Tels. (075) 515-5960; 515-6529; (0919) 348-7131

CLASSIFIEDS

Republic of the Philippines
SENATE

INVITATION TO PREQUALIFY AND TO BID

(Reference: Admin Order No. 001, s. 1988)

The SENATE OF THE PHILIPPINES is hereby inviting interested contractors/suppliers to bid for the following:

ITEM NO.	DESCRIPTION	PRE-BIDDING CONFERENCE	PUBLIC BIDDING
1.	Four (4) sets Conference & Discussion System consisting of Four (4) Central Power & Control Units, Four (4) Chairman's Microphone units. Sixty-eight (68) Delegate's Microphone units and Four (4) units Microphone Extension Cables	24 April 2001, 10:00 AM	26 April 2001, 10:00 AM
2.	Twenty (20) units Semi-Automatic Pistol, 9MM	24 April 2001, 11:00 AM	26 April 2001, 11:00 AM

All interested contractors/suppliers may secure prequalification requirements from the PBAC Secretariat Office located at Rm. 401, 4/F, Senate of the Philippines, GSIS Building, Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City on 5-11 April 2001. Deadline for submission of duly accomplished prequalification documents shall be on 18 April 2001. Incomplete prequalification requirements will not be entertained. All applicants shall be notified on the result of the evaluation of prequalification documents submitted.

Bidders shall be required to post a bidder's bond equivalent to five percent (5%) of the total bid price or Ten Thousand Pesos (P10,000.00) whichever is higher in the form of cash, manager's check, cashier's check or surety bond issued by the GSIS. All surety bonds must be callable on demand.

THE SENATE OF THE PHILIPPINES RESERVES THE RIGHT TO CONFISCATE THE BID BOND SHOULD THE WINNING BIDDER REFUSE TO ACCEPT THEIR AWARD, AND THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS OR ANY PART THEREOF, WAIVE ANY DEFECTS CONTAINED THEREIN AND ACCEPT AN OFFER MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE GOVERNMENT.

(Sgd.) **ATTY. ARNEL JOSE S. BAÑAS**
Chairman, Prequalification, Bids & Awards Committee

(PDI--April 4, 5 & 6, 2001)

LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES
Official Depository Bank of the Republic of the Philippines

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID FOR THE SUPPLY, DELIVERY AND ASSEMBLY OF THE FOLLOWING:

a. Contract Package No. 13: Four (4)-Drawer Lateral Files (Stand Alone) with Overhead File Cabinet, Four (4)-Drawer Lateral Files (Stand Alone) without Overhead Cabinet and Open File Shelves;
b. Contract Package No. 13A: Lateral Files (On Tracks with Fixed File Cabinet);
c. Contract Package No. 13B: File Cabinet for Maps and Index Cards; and
d. Contract Package No. 13C: File Compactors

All corporations registered with the Philippine Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), with extensive experience in the supply, delivery and assembly of lateral files and compactors for office buildings are invited to apply for pre-qualification and bidding for Contract Package Nos. 13, 13A, 13B and 13C for the new LBP Headquarters Building in Malate, Manila with the following schedule:

Issuance of Pre-Qualification Form	Pre-qualification Conference	Issuance of Notices of Pre-qualification/ Pre-disqualification after		Issuance of Notice of Pre-Qualification/ Pre-Disqualification	Issuance of Bid Documents	Pre-Bid Conference	Bidding Date
April 05 to 11, 2001 @ 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM	April 16, 2001 @ 10:00 AM	a. Evaluation of Pre-qualification Documents & Brochures	May 04, 2001	May 21, 2001	May 22 to 23, 2001 @ 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM	May 24, 2001 @ 10:00 AM	May 30, 2001 @ 10:00 AM
		b. Evaluation of displays versus Brochures	May 11, 2001				
		c. Selection of top choices for the displays by Sub-Committee and Special Committee	May 21, 2001				

All interested Suppliers may obtain the Pre-qualification forms from the LBP Ad Hoc Group Office, c/o Project Management and Engineering Department (PMED), 2F LBP Bldg. III, 315 Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City, upon payment of a non-refundable processing fee of P1,400.00.

After the pre-qualification conference, Suppliers shall be given four (4) calendar days to signify in writing their interest to join the pre-qualification process by accomplishing the proforma Letter of Intent (LOI) included in the pre-qualification forms issued earlier. Attendance to the pre-qualification conference is among the requirements for pre-qualification.

Duly accomplished Pre-qualification forms shall be submitted to and received at the above-stated office not later than April 24, 2001, 3:00 PM after which no documents will be accepted. All participating suppliers shall be notified in writing of the results of the pre-qualification.

Only pre-qualified suppliers may secure Bid Documents at the above-stated office/date upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P5,000.00.

Pre-Qualification and Pre-Bid conferences will be held on the above-stated date and time at the FMGSG Conference Room , 2F, LBP Bldg. III, 315 Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City.

Bidding shall be conducted using the two (2) envelope system (envelopes "A" & "B") to be submitted to and received not later than 10:00 AM on May 30, 2001 (the Bidding Date). Bidding shall be held at the FMGSG Conference Room, 2F, LBP Bldg. III, 315 Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City.

LBP reserves the right to change the date of issuance of bid documents, pre-bid conference and bidding date. Due notice of changes shall however be communicated by LBP to pre-qualified bidders.

LBP likewise reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any defect or formality, assume no obligation whatsoever to compensate or indemnify the bidders for any expense/loss that they may incur during the preparation of their bids, and to accept the bid that is most advantageous to the Bank.

GILDA E. PICO
CHAIRMAN,
SUB-COMMITTEE FOR LBP HQ BLDG. PROJECT

(PDI -- April 4, 5 & 6, 2001)

Republic of the Philippines
SOCIAL SECURITY COMMISSION
Makati City

ROSARIO L. SEGUIN,
Petitioner,

- versus - **SSC CASE NO. 12-15108-2000**

LORNA SEGUIN,
Respondent,

SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM,
Intervenor.
x------------------------------------x

SUMMONS

TO: MS. LORNA SEGUIN

GREETINGS:

Your are hereby required to file within fifteen (15) days from the date of publication of this Summons with the Office of the Clerk of the Commission, 12th Floor, SSS (Makati) Building, 6782 Ayala Avenue corner Herrera Street, Makati City, your Answer to the Petition filed by Rosario L. Seguin, which in substance claims, that she is the surviving spouse of Alfredo Seguin (SS No. 03-1142949-3), and as such is solely entitled to the benefit arising from his death.

You are further required to serve a copy of your Answer upon the petitioner at Brgy. Bito-on, Jaro, Iloilo City and upon the SSS through the Senior Vice-President, Legal and Collection, East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City.

If you fail to answer within the time prescribed above, the Hearing Commissioner, may upon motion of the petitioner or motu-proprio, declare you in default and shall forthwith proceed to receive the petitioner's evidence ex-parte and thereafter recommend to the Commission either the granting or denial of the petition as the evidence may warrant.

SO ORDERED.

Makati City, Philippines, March 30, 2001.

SOCIAL SECURITY COMMISSION

MOTORING

CESAR D. MANGAWANG, Editor

GIANT ROLLING COFFINS

The cycle of death rolls on

BY TESSA R. SALAZAR

(Last of three parts)

THE TRUCK'S air compressor bursts. A fuel tanker loses its brakes and explodes. A passenger bus careens out of control. Every living being—women, children, family—in the way is dragged violently to the cycle of death.

On March 19, a week before the first article on carelessly converted trucks saw print, a raging 10-wheeler crude oil tanker truck owned by the DP Freight Services caught fire along Coastal Road, Parañaque City, plowed through four passenger jeeps and ran over bystanders. That was the end for 14 lives.

On the onset of the investigations, the tanker's tire was being blamed for the malfunction. The right-hand drive wipers, however, betrayed the true culprit. But this is just the tip of the iceberg.

Another angle surfaced thereafter. Before the tanker collided, a fire could have originated from a grounded electrical harness which could be found under the dashboard on the driver's side. The theory was backed up by two automotive mechanics and an automotive technologist.

But regardless of what the results of the technical investigation ultimately reveal, the fact remains that the fuel tanker was a tragedy waiting to happen. A giant coffin waiting for its permanent tenant.

The truck had all the qualities of a killer truck: a "welded" built-up draglink that would be a technological blunder since this weakens the entire metal structure. The air line brake system was welded. Pipes were welded. The gearbox mount was welded. The steel tubing was welded.

COASTAL MISHAP. The charred remains of the killer tanker March 19

SPECIAL REPORT

"The tanker underwent extensive modification. It was converted from a dump truck to a cargo truck, then into a tanker," said automotive mechanic Mercedo Pandan after seeing the truck's documents. Pandan was with an automotive technologist and another truck mechanic for the analysis.

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"The tanker wasn't physically inspected (before it was given registration documents by the LTO) because if it were, all defects would have been discovered by the investigator," said the automotive technologist who refused to be identified.

"They (investigators) only relied on the affidavit of undertaking which actually is only a document that certifies that it was done in accordance with the Philippine National Standard of the Department of Trade and Industry. The mechanic is supposed to certify that he has done it in accordance with the PNS," he added.

THE AIR Line steel tubes that took a dangerous short cut via cutting and welding

THE BRAKE system's welded steel tube

In an earlier interview with the LTO's registration chief, Merceditas Gutierrez, she admitted that the agency lacks the technical knowledge to determine the technological specifications of repositioned trucks. She added, however, that the LTO should not be singled out since the agency is not responsible for the mass importation of secondhand trucks and trucks coming from right-hand drive (RHD) countries.

Gutierrez also added that one should not discount the possibility that registration documents of some defective trucks were spurious.

In the data obtained by the INQUIRER, the LTO was blamed for not imposing any accreditation of motor shops and that conversion was an open policy which could be done by any shop provided that the repositioning conformed to the Philippine National Standard. The document added that it was assumed that those doing the repositioning were complying with the prescribed standards even if they were not accredited reconditioning centers.

Prerequisite to registration

But the law has been clear that conformity with the PNS was a prerequisite to registration, and that no RHD conversion could be registered if the requirements were not met.

The standard procedures for meeting requirements include headlights, wipers, draglink and pipes. As earlier pointed out, headlights of RHD vehicles have to be replaced because the pattern of the beam differed from LHD vehicles. RHD and LHD have entirely opposite beam light patterns adapted to the traffic safety rules of a particular country's road system. An unconverted RHD vehicle in an LHD road system increases the risk of head-on collisions and pedestrian accidents.

Wipers, on the other hand, are positioned where the sweep of the arm is always toward the driver in order to increase the field of vision of the driver during rainy conditions and minimize the blind spots. If this were not done, decrease in field of vision would put the drivers and oncoming vehicles at risk.

Meanwhile, cutting and welding a steel brake pipe to a copper pipe and brazed with brass, as stressed in the PNS, was prohibited. "Welding dissimilar metals cause galvanic corrosion and could causes breakage of the brake pipes under pressure," as indicated in the document. It added that the use of copper brazed with brass to steel could also cause brake failure since copper is malleable. Vibrations would "work harden" the copper, which could cause cracks and brake failure.

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Meanwhile, Bureau of Product Standard director Alexander Arcilla said the role of the DTI is to provide the repositioning standards. When it comes to implementation, he said that it is the role of the LTO or the Department of Transportation and Communication.

"Units have to be checked prior to registration. Trucks should be scrutinized," he said. "But the technical knowledge comes from the BPS. That's why if there's a need, the DTI will develop an accreditation scheme."

Technical investigation report

LTO education chief Daisy Jacobo mentioned the Traffic Accident Investigation Report implemented by the interagency road safety committee several years ago. Recommended to standardize accident reporting in the Philippines, a standard TAIR is accomplished in five copies—one each for the accident victim, for the one who caused the accident, for the police, for the insurance company, and for the court.

The technicalities detailing the causes of an accident were supposed to be included, she said, but weren't actually implemented.

"If a vehicle involved in the accident or the one that had caused it had been a former RHD converted into a left-hand drive, this should be included in an accident report," she said. Jacobo added that there is a need for skills upgrading among investigators to promote road safety as well as the ability of the traffic enforcer and the deputized agents to handle reports.

Click that Camera Now & Join

MDPPA

ASIAN MOTORCYCLE SAFETY PHOTO CONTEST

(Enhancement of Motorcycle Image)

And be the Gold Award Winner of a Trip to Japan plus a pocket money of US$700 w/ free Hotel Accomodation for 7 days and a chance to visit Tokyo Motorshow 2001 this October

Think Safety Ride Safely

FAMI Federation of Asian Motorcycle Industries

Photography Contest

Silver Award - Compact Camera
Bronze award- Portable CD Player
Effort Award- Wrist Watch
(Each participant will receive free T-shirt)

CONTEST MECHANICS

Contest Theme :
THINK SAFETY-RIDE SAFELY

- The contest is open to any individal (amateur and professional photographers)
- Contestants must be 18 years old and above
- Entry must promote **safety as the first concerned**
- It must **visually express the enjoyment of safe motorcycle riding**
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- No additional parts adaptation only originally manufactured models are allowed to join
- Pictures must be original and must not have been published before in any publication or form
- Submit two (2) copies of 5R colored or black & white picture plus the negatives
- Indicate title of the picture, shot specifications and shooting location
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All entries must be submitted together with following personal information
1. Complete name
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- June 30, 2001 Deadline of submission of entries
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- Winners will be notify through mails and will be published in the leading newspapers
- Prizes may be claimed within sixty (60) days from the date of notification
- Prizes not claimed within 60 days are deemed forfeited in favor of MDPPA
- All winning entries will be exclusively owned by MDPPA and may use them in whatever manners they wish to
- All employees of MDPPA member companies are disqualified from joining the contest
- Coverage of the contest will be nationwide

Best Photographer will be Awarded a FREE 7 DAYS TRIP TO JAPAN via Singapore WITH ALL EXPENSES PAID plus US$700.00 pocket money

(NOTE: Prizes are not convertible to CASH)

Criteria for Judging	
Visual Appeal / Impact	- 30%
Relevance to Theme	- 30%
Creativity / Originality	- 20%
Quality of Photo	- 20%

Sponsored by:

SHELL

MOTOLITE
MOTORCYCLE BATTERY

Entries should be sent to the following address:
MDPPA Safety Riding on two-Wheels Photo Contest
MDPPA Secretariat c/o CAMPI Office
Suite 1206 12th flr. Jollibee Center, San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City

FAMI consists of MOTORCYCLE ASSOCIATION COMPRICING
INDIA, INDONESIA, JAPAN, MALAYSIA, PHILIPPINES, SINGAPORE, TAIWAN, THAILAND

Photo tilt on motorbike riding safety launched

THE PHILIPPINE segment of the first Asian motorcycle photography contest was launched recently at Hotel Rembrandt on Tomas Morato Extension in Quezon City.

Carrying the theme "Think Safety. Ride Safely," the photo contest is a joint project of the Singapore-based Federation of Asian Motorcycle Industries (Fami), Motorcycle Development Program Participants' Association (MDPPA) and the Japan Automobile Manufacturing Association (Jama).

The competition aims to promote motorcycle-riding safety in the region, according to Joe Perez, local project manager and chair of the MDPPA government and planning committee.

The project, which is sponsored here by Shell and Motolite, also intends to raise public awareness that the affordable motorbike is a safe alternative means of transportation, particularly in traffic-clogged urban centers.

Motorcycle associations in India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan and Thailand are simultaneously conducting similar photo contests. In the Philippines, the MDPPA members are Honda, Kawasaki, Kymco, Suzuki and Yamaha.

Alice Decolongon, MDPPA project coordinator, said the competition is open to all individuals, including professional photographers, provided they are 18 years old and above. Digital cameras are not allowed.

The top prize is a trip to Japan with free accommodation for seven days and pocket money amounting to $700. The trip will be highlighted by a visit, together with the other country winners, to the prestigious Tokyo Motor Show scheduled this coming October.

Mechanics of the contest will be published in major newspapers and posters to be distributed to motorcycle dealers, Shell stations and Motolite battery shops. For more details, call up the MDPPA secretariat at 632-9734.

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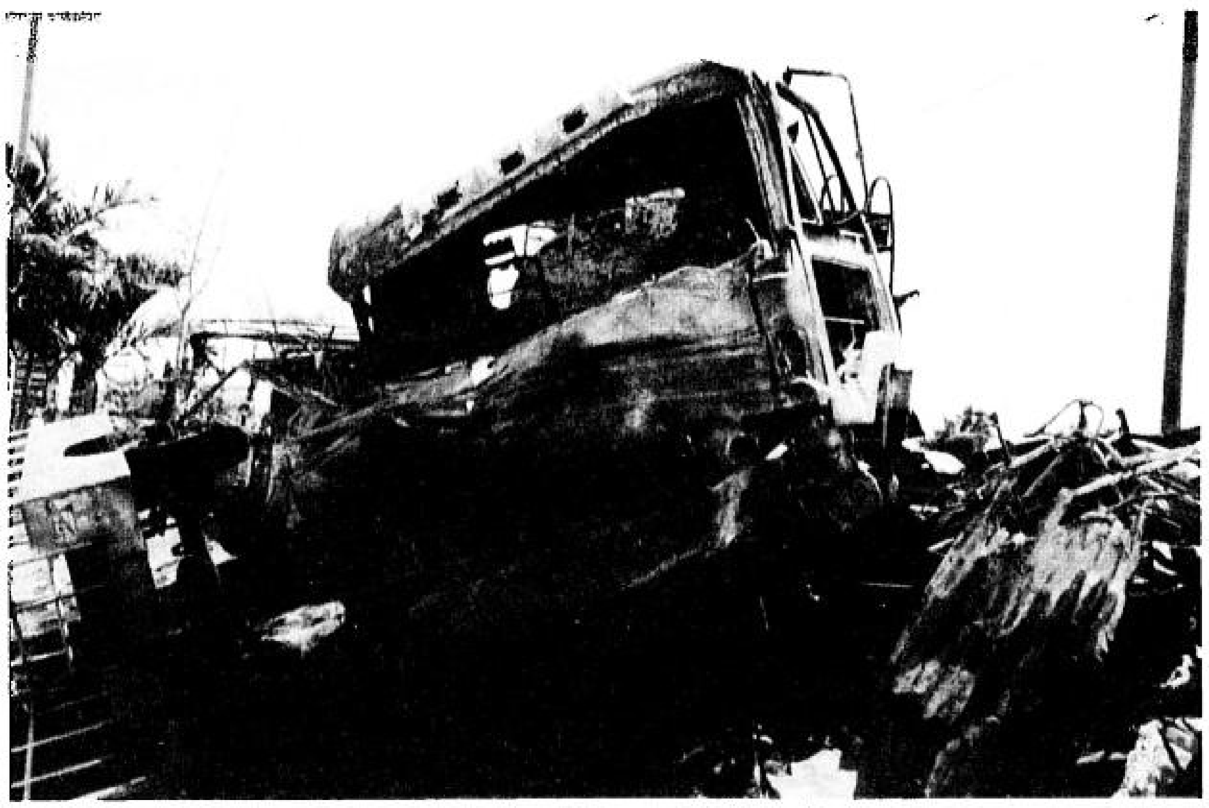

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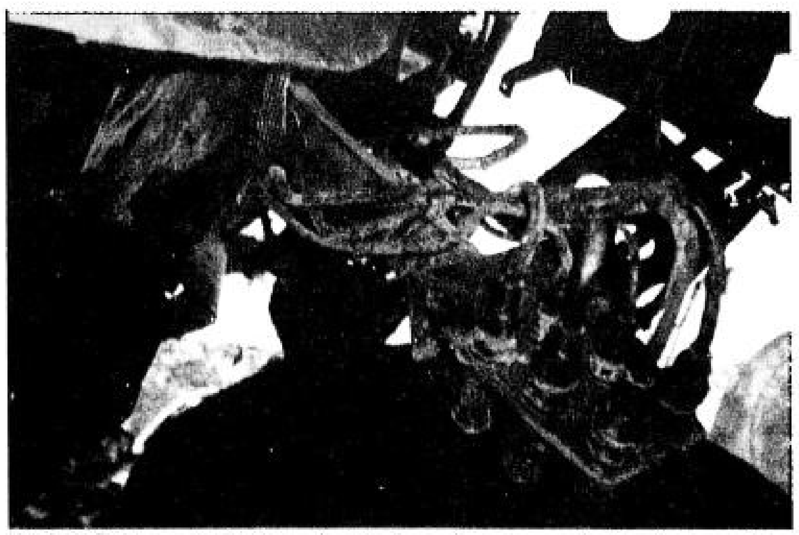

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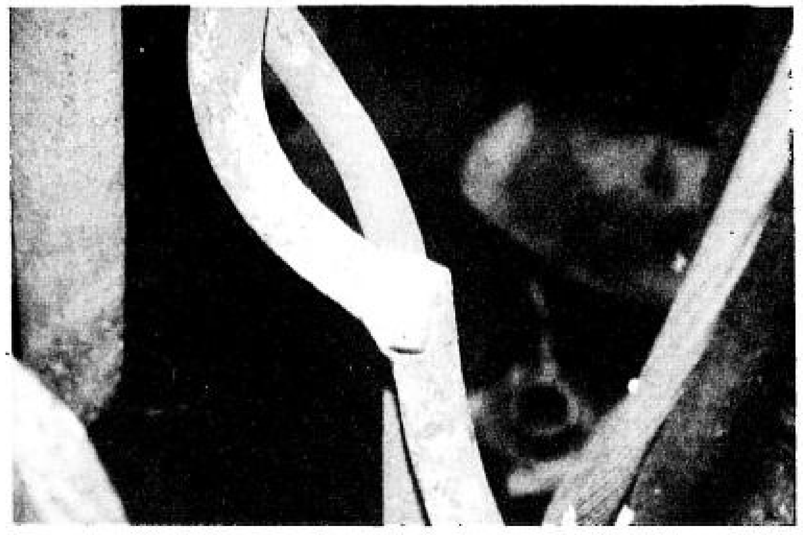

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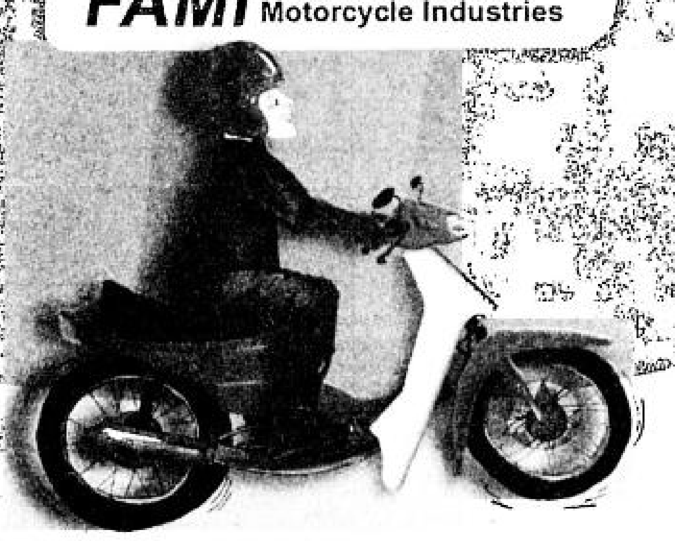
Photography Contest
MDPPA



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- All employees of MDPPA member companies are disqualified from joining the contest
- Coverage of the contest will be nationwide

Best Photographer will be Awarded a FREE 7 DAYS TRIP TO JAPAN via Singapore WITH ALL EXPENSES PAID plus US$700.00 pocket money

(NOTE: Prizes are not convertible to CASH)

Criteria for Judging
Visual Appeal / Impact - 30%
Relevance to Theme - 30%
Creativity / Originality - 20%
Quality of Photo - 20%

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Entries should be sent to the following address
MDPPA Safety Riding on two-Wheels Photo Contest
MDPPA Secretariat c/o CAMPI Office
Suite 1206 12th flr. Jollibee Center, San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City

FAMI consists of MOTORCYCLE ASSOCIATION COMPRICING
INDIA, INDONESIA, JAPAN, MALAYSIA, PHILIPPINES, SINGAPORE, TAIWAN, THAILAND

Photo tilt on motorbike riding safety launched

THE PHILIPPINE segment of the first Asian motorcycle photography contest was launched recently at Hotel Rembrandt on Tomas Morato Extension in Quezon City.

Carrying the theme "Think Safety. Ride Safely," the photo contest is a joint project of the Singapore-based Federation of Asian Motorcycle Industries (Fami), Motorcycle Development Program Participants' Association (MDPPA) and the Japan Automobile Manufacturing Association (Jama).

The competition aims to promote motorcycle-riding safety in the region, according to Joe Perez, local project manager and chair of the MDPPA government and planning committee.

The project, which is sponsored here by Shell and Motolite, also intends to raise public awareness that the affordable motorbike is a safe alternative means of transportation, particularly in traffic-clogged urban centers.

Motorcycle associations in India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan and Thailand are simultaneously conducting similar photo contests. In the Philippines, the MDPPA members are Honda, Kawasaki, Kymco, Suzuki and Yamaha.

Alice Decolongon, MDPPA project coordinator, said the competition is open to all individuals, including professional photographers, provided they are 18 years old and above. Digital cameras are not allowed.

The top prize is a trip to Japan with free accommodation for seven days and pocket money amounting to $700. The trip will be highlighted by a visit, together with the other country winners, to the prestigious Tokyo Motor Show scheduled this coming October.

Mechanics of the contest will be published in major newspapers and posters to be distributed to motorcycle dealers, Shell stations and Motolite battery shops. For more details, call up the MDPPA secretariat at 632-9734.

Cats launches Mercedes C-class sports coupé

BY VERNON B. SARNE

THE MERCEDES-BENZ marque is enjoying a furious marketing campaign courtesy of Cats Motors, an authorized dealer of Mercedes vehicles in Edsa Greenhills. Last Friday, Cats, together with DaimlerChrysler Southeast Asia and Commercial Motors Corp., launched the new C-class sports coupé. The Philippines is the first Asian country to witness the launch of the coupé.

Already selling a wide range of Mercedes-Benz cars, including the S-class, the E-class, the C-class, the A-class and the M-class SUV, Cats Motors is bent on restoring the prestigious image of the German carmaker in the country by offering Mercedes customers an extensive product line that is seen to kill gray-market vendors importing warranty-less Benzes.

The new car, which Mercedes tags as a coupé despite its hatchback layout, is a 2-door version of the C-class sedan. It boasts, among other things, a panoramic sliding sunroof and sports seats.

THE C-CLASS sports coupé

Only one engine is available for the C-class sports coupé here. The 2.0-liter supercharged C200 Kompressor motor gives the car 160 horses of power and 23.4 kg-m of torque. Its 0 to 100 kph acceleration has been timed at 9.3 seconds, with a top speed of 230 kph. The engine is mated to a 5-speed automatic transmission. The livelier Sequentronic 6-speed manual stickshift should be available by indent.

DaimlerChrysler Southeast Asia regional sales manager Roelof Lamberts planed in to join Cats Motors president Felix Ang and Commercial Motors vice president Patrick Lee in unveiling the C-class sports coupé.

Two versions of the C-class sports coupé are available. The Dynamic trim sells for P2.75 million, while the higher-end Innovation trim—with bigger alloy wheels, more airbags and a better audio system—is priced at P2.95 million.

PANORAMIC sliding sunroof

Small but terrible

FULL TANK

Al S. Mendoza

ROMMEL Cortez of Nissan calls the Verita "super duper."

Ariel de Jesus of Toyota calls the Echo (and Verso) "the newest babes in the family."

Both car giants have taken the lead in attacking the market with cars that are classified in the lower weight categories. They unleashed their "babes" late last year. It didn't take long before the new models became head-turners.

To be honest, I call both the Verita and Echo/Verso the undisputed co-champions in the motoring industry's mini-flyweight division today. They are like Onyok Velasco of the 1996 Atlanta Olympic fame and the Lerio Bros. of the 2000 Sydney Olympiad. All three boxers were in the flyweight class.

Their common denominator? They are all small.

And, yes, let me add: Small but terrible.

* * *

The vehicles are almost identical in features, internally that is.

For example, both are 1.3 liters, equipped each with a 16-valve twin cam engine and a 4-cyclinder in-line. The torque for each is 10.5 kg-m and both models each has 4,000 rpm. DOHC, too.

They are basically differentiated by their unique designs—the Echo/Verso being very Frenchy (remember the Citroen if not the Renault?) and the Verita very antique.

While the Echo/Verso is almost avant-garde, the Verita is a virtual repro of some of the oldest classic car models of all time.

* * *

I have forgotten about the price of the Echo/Verso. But coming from Rommel, Tonette Lee's dog-loving lieutenant whose pet is the expensively pedigreed Dalmatian, a Verita costs P685,000.

A little costly, you think?

If you want character, plus a touch of a blast from the past, then the Verita won't be that costly. In fact, a friend of mine wants to buy not just one but two Veritas.

"One for me and one for my son," my friend said.

"Tell him to call me," said Rommel of my friend. "I'll be very glad to attend to him."

* * *

Sanden Aircon Servicemaster Inc. now accepts air-con brands other than Sanden for servicing.

"We have decided to finally open our door to non-Sanden air-conditioning systems, as well as non-Sanden air-con parts," said Dennis Balod, Sanden general manager.

This summer, Sanden shops are open daily up to May 20, except April 15, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Its shops are located at Quezon Avenue, Quezon City; Pasong Tamo Extension, Makati City; Alabang Road, Las Piñas City; Ortigas Avenue Extension, Cainta; Greenhills Cats Edsa and Las Piñas Cats.

* * *

Next week's Lenten season will see the proliferation once more of free services on the road promised by many sectors of society.

Meaning, motorists going home to their roots will receive free assistance should their vehicles suffer mechanical or engine troubles along the way.

From Nissan Motor Philippines Inc. (NMPI), this promise:

"NMPI, in cooperation with Universal Motors Corp, Univille Motors Corp. and Caltex Philippines, offers a roadside assistance to motorists during Lent.

"Scheduled from Holy Wednesday to Black Saturday, Nissan service personnel will be stationed at strategic locations along major destinations north and south of Metro Manila.

"Free labor service for quick repairs (repairs done in less than 2 hours) and free exhaust gas emission tests will be made available in the Baguio station.

"North-bound vehicles can avail of Nissan services in Baguio, Cabanatuan City, San Fernando in Pampanga and Baliwag in Bulacan. South-bound vehicles can avail of these services in San Pablo City and Dasmariñas, Cavite."

* * *

Sheila Tolentino of Isuzu has sent an SOS, airing her grievance against La Savoie Development Corp. of Makati City that refuses to hand her the mother title of her lot.

"I badly need it because Pag-Ibig wants to see the original copy as a condition for the release of my loan for a house and lot," she said. "Please help me with my problem, Mr. Mendoza?"

Sure, dearie.

Sheila said Pag-Ibig was ready to give P50,000 "so that I could fully pay in full the lot that I purchased last year."

But Sheila said La Savoie ignored—and continues to ignore—her plea to have the mother title given her. Sheila has written Ms Jeanne Menguito, president of La Savoie, emphasizing, among other things, that her loan is due to mature in May 2001. But Sheila's plea seems to have fallen on deaf ears.

"They say the mother title is in the bank as a loan collateral," Sheila said. "But why was a fellow buyer given the mother title? Why not me, too? Like my fellow lot buyer, I also need the mother title so that I can have my lot titled, which is a requirement of Pag-Ibig for my entire loan to be released."

Sheila said she and her husband had spent their savings building the house, now halfway completed.

"The mother title is the key to the full realization of our dream house and lot," said Sheila, a hardworking doll at Isuzu Philippines who had just delivered her first-born.

Paging Ms Menguito of La Savoie. I tried getting in touch with you but someone in your office always said you were out each time I called.

* * *

Michael Schumacher's six-leg winning streak was snapped by David Coulthard in the Brazilian Grand Prix last Sunday.

Coulthard of McLaren-Mercedes Benz won the season's third of 17 legs after finishing second behind Ferrari's Schumacher in Melbourne and third behind Schumacher and Rubens Barrichello in another Ferrari in Kuala Lumpur last March 18.

With 20 points, Coulthard the Scotman is second behind Schumacher the German who had 26 on two first-place finishes and one runner-up finish.

My bet, Heinz-Harald Frentzen of Jordan Honda, did not finish in Brazil due to mechanical trouble. He was fourth in KL and fifth in the season opener in Melbourne.

Like in Kuala Lumpur, it also rained in Sao Paulo during the race and the safety car had to enter the track. This time, though, Coulthard, who was leading in KL when the rains also came, stood his ground and beat Schumacher, who was seeking to equal Alberto Ascari's nine straight Grand Prix legs in the 1952-1953 season.

The fourth leg will be in Imola, Italy, for the San Marino GP on April 15.

Maybe, I'll take a vacation and join Gabriele Boschi to Italy?

I miss the Sistine Chapel already.

Vehicle air-con maintenance tips

SUMMER is fast approaching and the scorching heat is as inevitable as the traffic we experience every day. It pays to have a cool place to hang out during this unbearable season, so if you have a cranky and temperamental air-conditioner in your car, check out the following tips from Isuzu Philippines Corp. to keep the summer heat away.

An air-conditioner that needs servicing usually gives one of the following symptoms:

- The air is no longer as cold as it used to be.
- An unfamiliar smell emanates from the air-con vents.
- Water leaks on to the floor of the front-passenger compartments.
- The defroster cannot defog the windshield anymore.
- The drive belts, compressor or blower of the air-con are noisier.
- You simply hear a recurring clicking sound from beneath the hood once you turn on the air-conditioning system.

You have to perform the following to address the problem:

- Check or replace the drive belts.
- Clean the radiator and air-con condenser fins
- Check the duct outlet temperature.
- Check all electrical connections.
- Check the hoses and the compressor hardware for leaks.

Be sure to remember that if the situation with your air-con gets worse, it is advisable to consult with a reliable air-con shop. As a precautionary measure, visit the nearest Isuzu authorized service center and have your air-conditioning system regularly checked at least once a year.

A true MPV

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

IF there's a car that deserves the MPV (multipurpose vehicle) label, it's the Zafira. Launched in Europe in January 1999 with the Vauxhall badge to compete with the Renault Scenic and Fiat Multipla as the most family friendly five-door compact minivan, here in the Philippines it was introduced in September 2000 bearing the Chevrolet marque to compete with the Toyota Echo Verso, Lite Ace, Mitsubishi Space Wagon and perhaps with bigger Japanese and Korean minivans such as the Mitsubishi Space Gear, Hyundai Starex and Kia Carnival.

The Zafira's main claim to fame is its Flex7 seating design that allows you to stow away seats and thereby mix n' match passengers and cargo. General Motors markets the Zafira as the world's first 1X7 car, meaning you can transform it from seven- to single-seater in only 35 seconds.

The Zafira has three rows of seats: two bucket seats in front for driver and passenger, a middle seat that can accommodate three adults, and two individual rear seats complete with pull-up, adjustable headrests and three-point seatbelts plus enough headroom for a six-footer.

The Zafira's middle seat is a 60/40 split bench that can slide back and forth up to eight inches on castors. The backrest can be hinged up and locked in position vertically, so that the whole mid-bench can be pushed forward to sit up tight against the front seats. If only two passengers sit in the second row, there is enough space for longer objects, such as golf clubs.

The two rearmost seats, when not in use, can be folded forward (without having to remove the headrests) by simply pushing a button and then tucking the folded seats into a hollow in the floor, partly under the mid-bench, leaving a flat, carpeted floor for cargo. The maximum cargo space is 1,700 liters. But first, you must slide the mid-bench forward to stow or set up the rear seats. With practice, the Zafira's seats can be rearranged with ease so that it becomes a two-seater on date night with your spouse or main squeeze, a five-seater for family outings or a seven-seater for the gang.

Loading cargo into the Zafira is easy because the rear door, when opened, provides a load bay 42 inches wide and 40 inches high.

For those who drive or have driven an Opel Astra estate wagon, the Zafira will seem awfully familiar. That's because despite the Chevrolet badge, the Zafira is a German product based on the Astra wagon and even has the same dashboard, dials, stalks and switches, but minus the wheel-mounted stereo controls. Another difference is that the Zafira CBU sold locally by GM Autoworld is equipped with a 1.8-liter, 16-valve ECOTEC engine and automatic transmission only while the Astra wagon comes with a 1.6-liter, 16-valve ECOTEC engine with a choice of manual or automatic transmission. Because of a bigger engine complemented by a light curb weight (only 1,430 kilos), the Zafira produces a respectable 115 horsepower @ 5,400 rpm compared to the Astra's 100 hp @ 6,000 rpm. Also, the Zafira has two airbags while the Astra has only one.

But the Zafira is unmistakably an Opel, with the same Teutonic rigidity and solidity of body, the refined road manners and the Astra's ability to zip around a corner more like a block of ice than a bag of water—meaning it doesn't sway or lose grip.

Safety-wise, aside from twin full-size front airbags, the Zafira has anti-lock brakes, engine immobilizer, front and rear fog lamps, a Pedal Release System that detaches pedals in case of a collision, side impact bars, pyrotechnic front seatbelt tensioners, and lap-and-shoulder belts for all outer seats.

When it comes to convenient features, the Zafira is not found wanting, except for the lack of a CD player and map lights. It has dual air-conditioning (front and rear), a Blaupunkt stereo cassette with six speakers, tiltable and telescopic power steering, central locking with keyless entry, power windows, power sideview mirror, pollen filter system, catalytic converter, headlamp leveling device, triple-info display (time, date and the temperature outside), chrome sill plates driver and co-driver side, eight cupholders and a luggage compartment cover. Storage space for smaller cargo? The Zafira offers a spacious glovebox, a drawer under the front passenger seat, bins on the front and rear doors and nets on the back of both front seats

Buying a Zafira is like buying a roomier, more versatile version of the Opel Astra estate wagon, so it will cost you more: P1,265,000.

* * *

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* * *

E-mail comments to aida_sevilla@pacific.net.ph

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BUSINESS

S&P seen raising RP credit outlook

By Clarissa S. Batino

FINANCE Secretary Alberto Romulo said yesterday he expected Standard & Poor's to revise the country's outlook from negative to stable on political and economic gains posted with the ouster of disgraced President Joseph Estrada.

A team sent by the international credit rating firm is scheduled to hold meetings with Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael Buenaventura, Economic Planning Secretary Dante Canlas and other economic managers to assess the Philippines' credit standing.

"We hope they would revise their outlook because, with the new government, the mood is already upbeat and we could already show a strong performance," Romulo said.

He said local interest rates were going down, inflation remained manageable, and economic growth appeared sustainable.

Much of the concerns of Standard & Poor's has focused on how the administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo plans to impose fiscal discipline to bring down its budget deficit and set in motion reforms like the privatization of the power sector.

Romulo said he had assured Standard & Poor's that the budget deficit would not exceed P145 billion, or 4 percent of gross domestic product, this year.

"In other words, projections have been met so far, and I had informed them that we are acting on the fiscal deficit as well as other concerns like the power bill," he told reporters.

The finance secretary said he was confident Standard & Poor's would agree with European credit rating firm Fitch IBCA's assessment of the Philippine economy.

Fitch IBCA revised last month its outlook for the Philippines from negative to stable.

Fitch IBCA also took the Philippines out of its negative watch list, which would have meant a ratings downgrade in the three months. It said, however, that a ratings upgrade in the near term was unlikely "as many challenges await Ms Macapagal and her as yet untried team."

Romulo said an improved outlook "was a step in the right direction."

Standard & Poor's, Moody's Investor Services and Fitch IBCA downgraded their outlook for the Philippines from stable to negative at the height of a political scandal that rocked the Estrada administration late last year.

Estrada was accused of accepting billions worth of illegal gambling payoffs by one of his former aides. The scandal led to a Senate impeachment trial that culminated in Estrada's ouster through a peaceful civilian revolt in January this year.

During the trial, the economy slumped, with the peso and stocks falling to historic lows.

Standard & Poor's and Fitch IBCA have given the Philippines a below-investment grade of BB+ while Moody's rated the country a "Ba1," also a below-investment grade.

Standard & Poor's was scheduled to send a mission in early February but postponed it to await further developments in the country.

Fitch IBCA, in revising upward its assessment, pointed to the peaceful transition of power to an "experienced and well-respected politician with a track record of supporting reforms."

BayanMAP acquires communications firm

By Anthony O. Alcantara

BAYANMAP Corp., a company under the Lopez group of companies, signed yesterday an agreement to purchase 51 percent of location-based services provider FindME.com.

ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp. chair and chief executive Eugenio Lopez III, head of the Lopez group's communications group, refused to reveal the purchase price.

"Location-based services are going to be a critical business. I think we can work well together. We (BayanMAP) have the digital maps while they (FindME.com) have the technology for tracking and locating," Lopez said after the signing ceremony.

Under the agreement, BayanMAP will have an option to buy up to 65 percent of the website FindME.com from WebCast Technologies Inc.

"We are also in discussions with some groups in Singapore (for possible equity partnerships or alliances)," said Lopez.

He did not give any projections but said they expected to be "in the black by next year."*Anthony O. Alcantara*

La Tondeña earnings seen down 20%

By Christine A. Gaylican

DUTCH investment firm ING Barings said yesterday La Tondeña Distillers Inc.'s earnings would shrink by 20 percent this year once it spins off its non-alcoholic beverage business.

"There would be an adverse effect on La Tondeña's earnings if the non-hard liquor business were removed," ING Barings said in its March "consumer strategy report."

It said without its non-alcoholic beverage business, La Tondeña would experience a 19.9-percent reduction in income from P1.78 billion last year to P1.425 billion this year.

Food and beverage giant San Miguel Corp., La Tondeña's parent firm, is planning to hand over its non-alcoholic beverage business to Sugarland Beverage Corp. San Miguel is considering transferring all non-alcoholic beverage products being marketed by La Tondeña to Sugarland.

Sugarland, a powdered juice and water gel manufacturer, was originally known as Sugarland Multifoods Corp. before it was acquired by San Miguel and folded into La Tondeña last year.

San Miguel wants to build Sugarland into a separate beverage company where a minority stake would be offered to The Coca-Cola Co.

Coca-Cola Bottlers Philippines Inc., which was jointly acquired by San Miguel and Coke from Coca-Cola Amatil Ltd. of Australia, would not necessarily be folded into Sugarland, according to persons familiar with the matter.

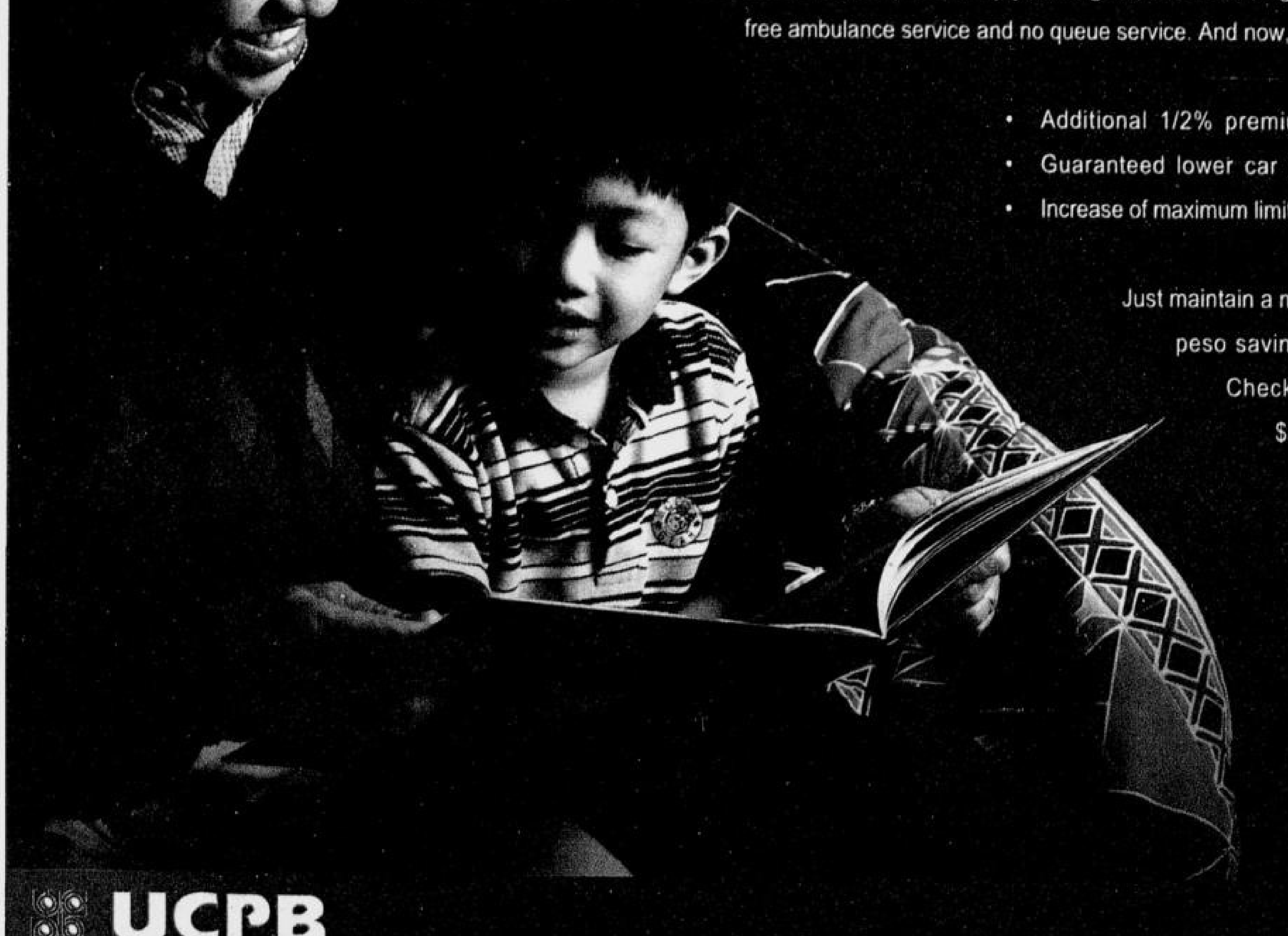
One reason why Coke backed up San Miguel's bid to regain control of Coca-Cola Philippines—apart from its disappointment with Coca-Cola Amatil's handling of its Philippine business—was its plan to embark on a non-carbonated beverage business in the Philippines through a strategic partnership with San Miguel.

The emerging plan was for San Miguel to control 60 to 65 percent of the spun-off Sugarland while 30 to 35 percent would be offered to Coke. Analysts said the plan would serve as a litmus test to the synergy between San Miguel and Coke in handling the beverage business for bigger ventures ahead.

Coke is also keen on acquiring a minority stake in La Tondeña. In case Coca-Cola Philippines is folded into La Tondeña, Coke's 35-percent stake may be converted into a minority stake in La Tondeña.

La Tondeña earlier reported that its net income fell 8 percent in January from a year earlier, dragged lower by higher interest expenses.

Consolidated sales jumped 18 percent to P1.3 billion from P1.1 billion last year and operating income rose 15 percent to P266 million from P231 million, it reported.



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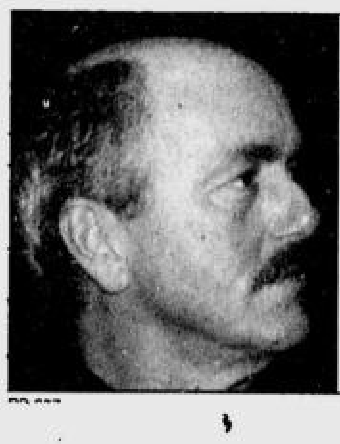

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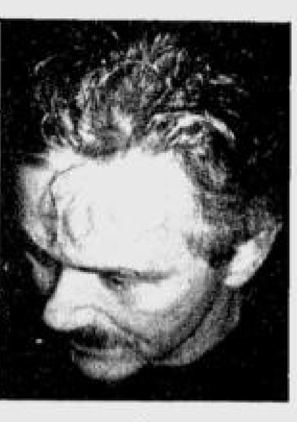

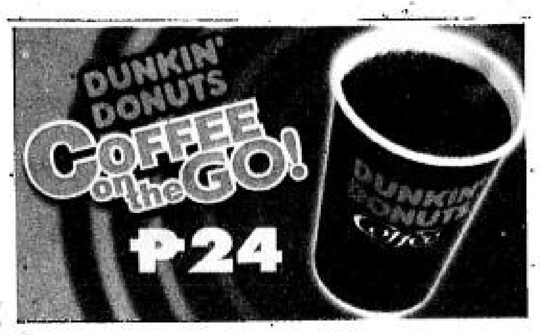
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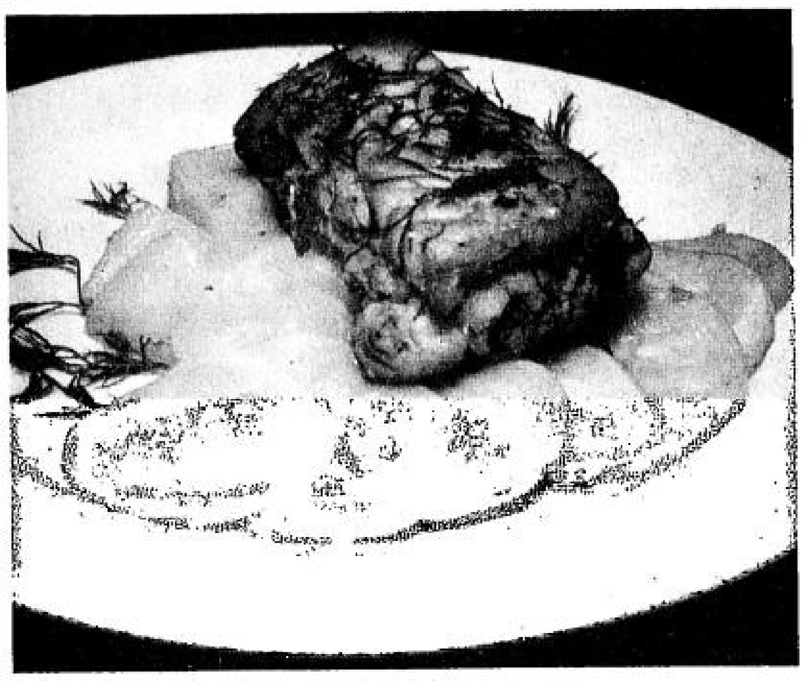

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Organic pleasures

By Alex Y. Vergara
Photos by Betoy Johnson

THANKS to her grandfather, Swiss national Jacqueline Hassig Alleje has been into healthy eating ever since she can remember. The old man made sure they finished their veggies and discouraged them from eating canned goods.

While growing up in Lausanne, a French-speaking city in Switzerland, Alleje preferred a plate of fresh salad or a bowl of sugar-free cereals sprinkled with berries and grated apples over barbecued meat and poultry dishes dripping with gravy.

"Believe it or not, I didn't like the taste of meat so I was forced to eat it," she recalls. "People back then thought children wouldn't grow up properly without enough meat dishes in their diets."

Alleje, thank goodness, didn't turn into a midget. Nor did she become a "strict" vegetarian. If anything, she took with her the healthy eating habits she has imbibed from her *lolo*, so much so that when she and husband Tony, a Filipino, opened Grapevine Organic Café late last year, Alleje made sure she would serve only fresh and organic foods whenever possible.

Grapevine, located on Yakal Street in Makati (tel. 894-1373), is open for lunch, *merienda* and dinner.

Natural and free

For those of you who grew up on Big Mac and Chicken Joy, a brief lesson: organic plants are cultivated without the use of chemical fertilizers and synthetic pesticides. Organic chick-

ORGANIC/ p.C4

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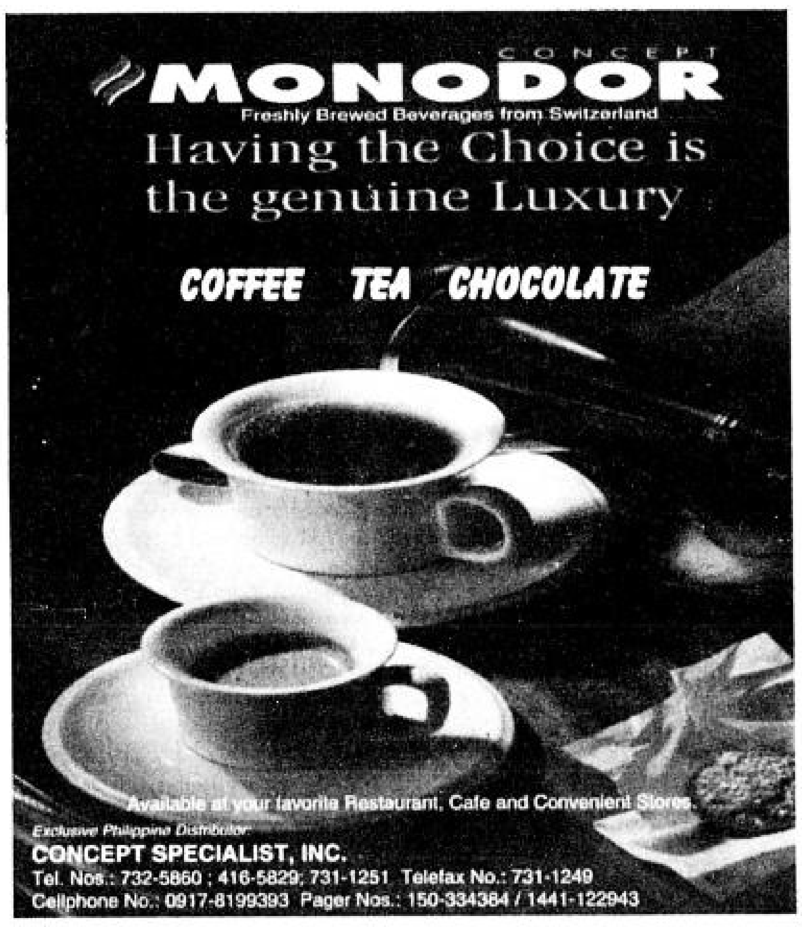
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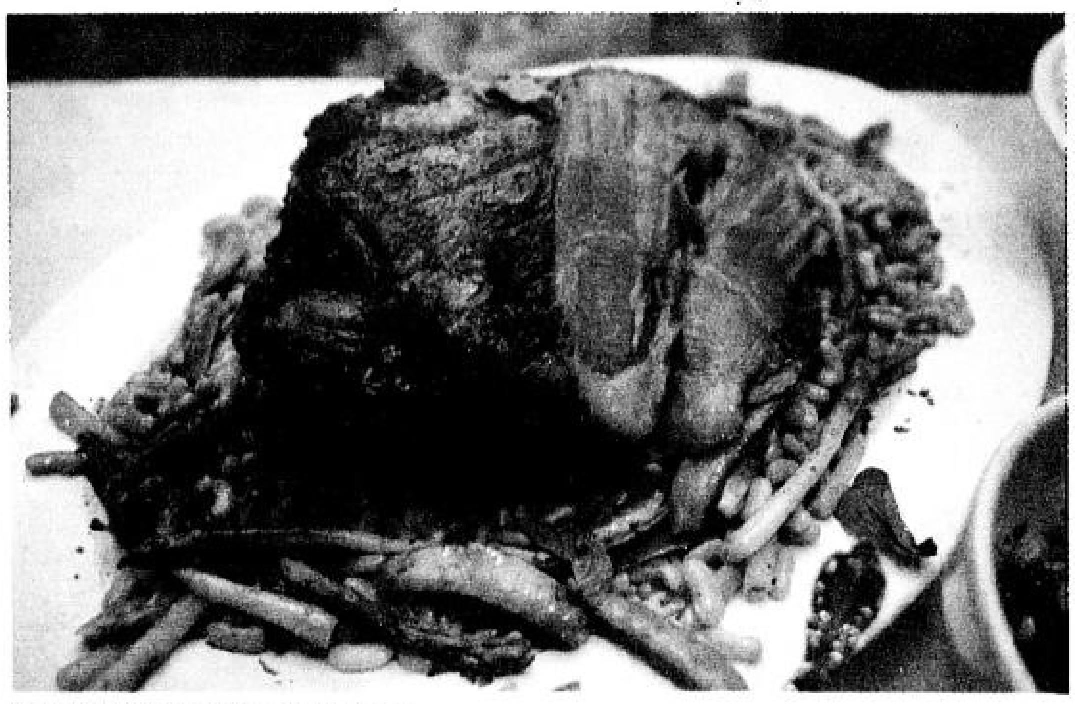


ROASTED herb lamb with mint relish

Catering for you, me and Shawie

Nelia Silverio Dee's celebrity clients include Sharon Cuneta, Richard and Lucy Gomez and Ben Chan, who got her started in the business

BY VANGIE BAGA-REYES

NELIA Silverio-Dee at work with daughter Isabel

"CATERING For You" is how Nelia Silverio Dee calls her food catering service. She thinks there is no need to coin fancy names for the business that has been catering to big and small parties, be it buffet or sit-down style, for three years now.

CATERING

Nelia started catering because of her good friend Ben Chan, the man behind the popular fashion brand Bench. One afternoon Chan visited Nelia in her house to order a line of soap, which is her other business (called One Pink Bubble Soap). She invited him to dinner and he enjoyed the food so much that he asked if Nelia catered. Without batting an eyelash, she said, "Yes, I do."

Ben eventually tapped Nelia's culinary talent for a surprise birthday party he was hosting for Lucy Torres, wife to Bench longtime image model Richard Gomez. "He told me to prepare all the best recipes and courses I could put together because he wanted Lucy to be happy," recalls Nelia, who readily prepared an exquisite Thai menu good for 50. Needless to say, the guests went home more than satisfied with the food, and some of them eventually became Nelia's clients. "After that party, I think Richard and Lucy asked us to cater for them the whole week, specifying the Thai dishes," she says. Nelia also catered the christening party of Richard and Lucy's daughter Julianna last year.

Nelia has also supplied the food for other show biz parties, the most recent of which was Sharon Cuneta's baby shower at her Wack Wack residence. She prepared a good selection of gourmet Filipino dishes, such *as sinigang na ulo ng salmon, bulalo* steak with shiitake mushroom and *pandan* wrapped *lumpia* with walnut and coriander sausage, *halo-halo* with a twist and *suman latik* with mango sauce flambé.

However, Nelia is quick to say she's not limited to show biz people. She also accepts catering orders from businessmen, ambassadors and, well, ordinary people.

Cooking as hobby

Cooking has always been Nelia's favorite hobby. "We used to hire catering services but we were not happy with the food, and they charged so much," says Nelia. Since her family knows she's an exceptional cook, they've been asking her to cater their parties. "Sometimes they pay, sometimes they don't," she quips. "We just tell them to prepare the ingredients and we do the cooking for them."

Nelia and her husband Bernard love to entertain at home. Like Nelia, Bernard is a good cook. Every meal in their home is like a feast, with three to five dishes on the table. "My husband would always say let's make *tipid* in other things but not with food. We should always have good food on the table," Nelia says.

Nelia started cooking at age 5. She used to stand on a stool to help her mom cook. She would sauté and fry simple dishes, of course, with careful supervision of the family cook. In time she was reading and collecting cookbooks to while away time. When she got married, she studied in different cooking schools and took short baking and cooking courses at San Francisco's California Culinary Academy. Every time she travels abroad, she makes it a point to take cooking lessons. That's how she picked up her expertise on Vietnamese and Thai cuisine. Locally, her favorite chef instructor is Reggie Aspiras. "I like the way she innovates and plays up with the dishes," she says. "I wish I could be like her."

Among Nelia's most sought-after dishes are *paella*, *cocido*, *kare-kare*, roasted herb lamb and baked salmon with her own secret sauce. Her bestseller is the *paella*. "I don't follow the way Spanish do their *paella*." Instead of using *arborio* rice, she uses Japanese rice and clam powder instead of the real clams if there happens to be red tide in the region.

Menu packages

Apart from cooking, Nelia also enjoys time spent on flower arrangement, table setting and conceptualizing themes. "I want everything to be nice so the guests are pleased with what they see and taste."

Nelia offers Middle Eastern, Mediterranean, Italian, Moroccan, Vietnamese, Thai and Gourmet Filipino dishes. Admittedly, her prices are on the high end because she doesn't scrimp on ingredients. She uses authentic herbs and spices. "If I can't get the particular ingredient, I would rather not cook it. I can't stand disappointing my clients."

Her Spanish menu, which costs P950 per person, is an array of green mixed salad with dressing or assortment *tapa*'s platter, baked fish in wine sauce, oxtail delight or pigs trotter stew, roast stuffed chicken with garlic and shallots, *paella mixta* and *crema catalan*/fruit genoise cake (kiwi, strawberry or mango).

Thai cuisine, for P900 per person, consists of shrimp with pomelo salad or crispy catfish with mango salad, *kra tong na thong* (rice crackers with minced pork dip), *tom yam* (seafood sour soup), fish with chili sauce, chicken *pandan*, roast duck curry or crab with tamarind sauce, crab rice or shrimp paste rice and *sago* pudding with coconut meat or Thai *halo-halo tako*.

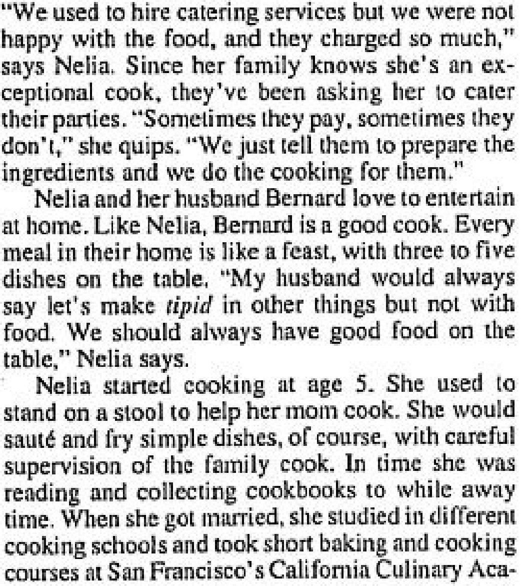
Mediterranean dishes, for P950, include refreshing watercress salad, exotic eggplant, roasted herb lamb with mint sauce or relish (whole lamb on a pit), *basmati* rice with golden *sultanas*, onions and almonds, Roman chicken curry, seafood couscous with *harissa* sauce, *fostokiya* (pistachio cake) and whipped strawberry with genoise cake.

Gourmet Filipino, for P800, serves *pandan* wrapped *ubod* with walnut and coriander sauce, *sinigang na* salmon with guava relish, *bulalo* steak with shiitake mushroom sauce, crispy *pata* with balsamic vinegar sauce, or chicken pastel with mashed potato topping, plain *pandan* rice, *halo-halo* and cassava cake with gruyere cheese topping.

Italian cuisine, for P900, comes with green salad or antipasto platter, minestrone soup, baked salmon in olive creme sauce with spaghettini pasta or scallop with roasted capsicum and sundried tomato, roast porkloin with pears helene, roast chicken with gravy or roast beef with gravy, tiramisu and fruit genoise.

For Nelia (tels. 843-4358, 844-4903 or 815-4555), putting up a catering service has been a simple task. But keeping a respectable name in the business is an entirely different matter. Either way, she's doing great.

E-mail the author at vbaga@inquirer.com.ph



PISTACHIO cake

REFRESHING watercress salad

PHOTOS BY JOHNNY VILLENA

Julius Maggi Kitchen

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Dining with men who play God

(From page C8)

a mushroom risotto which Ed called "fake" in that he had started with cooked rice, when he usually does not. Everyone liked this, and asked to take some home with the often-untouched chicken. A *degustation* menu, a tasting menu this epicurean meal was supposed to have been but Ed's passion for food and gratitude to his doctors made him do full portions instead.

Finally, finally dessert. Would you believe sugar-free crème brulée (Ed and I are both diabetics) in layers, with a rectangle of what looked like crisp *lumpia* wrappers interspersing the soft sweetness of the strawberry-flavored creme? On the plate was his signature in chocolate—not sugar-free.

Total calories, Ed announced, was 790, not counting dessert. Thus can haute cuisine accommodate dietary requirements.

First booking

Dr. Garcia capped the evening with a short speech, thanking Ed for the dinner, the pleasure, the experience. He told of a favorite restaurant in the US, in which a Chef's Table could be booked (with difficulty), and special items from the chef's repertoire served (expensively). In sum, he suggested that Ed start such a table, and he immediately booked dinner for a friend arriving from the US. His closing quip was that Ed could perhaps think of serving smaller, less generous portions.

How could Ed turn down the suggestion? "I love to cook, to feed people; that would not mean much more work. It would be a pleasure."

We thus have that to look forward to: a Chef's Table at the Brada Gallery, available only by reservation, and on which will be available Ed's creations. Requests will of course be entertained.

The name Brada, by the way, comes from Ed's late father, whom a Chinese amah enjoined to "take care of your 'blalah'." Thus he came to be called Brada, as did the gallery.

The Brada Gallery is on the fourth floor of the Creekside Building, corner Amorsolo and Herrera, tel. 893-7677. Go there to learn how to cook; there are courses on pastas, paellas, picas and more throughout the year. Go there to order catering of a high, exclusive order. And now, go there to eat well in a private place tended by a talented, passionate chef.

What a night it was indeed, this night of the doctors and haute cuisine. Yes, doctors, whom fictionist and doctor Arturo B. Rotor called "the men who play God," do have lives outside clinics and hospitals, and are as interested as any in the pleasure of food.

Ed Quimson's special quality is not only a deep knowledge of the roots of cuisine, but most importantly, a creative impulse that makes him push tradition beyond itself by a touch, a combination, a look backward or forward, a culinary pun, wit, constant improvisation and intuitive change.

P.S. In my column on Cucina Victoria, I misidentified the location of its sister restaurant, Café Mista. This is in the Greenbelt Mall, Ayala Center. My apologies.

This epicurean meal was supposed to have been a 'degustation' menu but Chef Ed Quimson's passion for food and appreciation of his medics prompted him to do full portions instead

Flavors of the Mediterranean

WHAT better way to spice up our family celebrations with food and conversation that bring all the generations together? It is for this reason that the Brada Gallery trio of chefs Ed Quimson, Ronald Sampaga and Robert Aguiles, suggest the preparation of fusion fare you can prepare in the comforts of your own kitchen.

Flavors of the Mediterranean and Asia make for zesty seafood curry, and pasta with its distinct Italian background has Atlantic fervor.

Seafood Curry

400 g fish fillet, cubed
400 g mussels (*tahong*)
400 g squid rings
300 g shrimps, peeled
1 pack Instant Coconut powder
1 c water
2 tbsp cooking oil
50 g minced garlic
½ C minced onions
¼ C tomato sauce
1-2 tbsp curry powder
1 tbsp chili powder
1 tsp salt

Dissolve the instant coconut powder as instructed on the package. Sauté garlic and onion in cooking oil. Drop in seafood, cover and cook for five minutes. Measure curry powder, chili and salt according to taste. Pour in coconut milk and tomato sauce. Simmer gently, stirring frequently until seafood is tender. A second cup of coconut milk may be added if needed.

Culinary courses for kids

SUMMER is a time for kids to have fun. But it also presents opportunities to learn something new and rewarding outside the classroom. The Maya Kitchen has the ideal answer, results guaranteed, with its Junior Culinary and Young People's Cook-in Workshops.

The first batch will be held on April 17 and 18, 8:30 a.m.-12 nn, and is divided into two categories. "Wrap and Pack Meals" teaches kids to prepare delightful Chicken Salad in a Loaf, Surprise Potato Croquettes, Burger Dog Sandwich and Cucumber Bites. "Bake and Decorate" features Edible Picture Frame, Gift Tag Cookies, Summer Hat and Spooky Muffins.

The second batch will run on April 19 and 20, 8:30 a.m.-12 nn. The categories include "Breakfast Ideas," which will guide kids in making Quick Breads, Eggs in a Nest, Sausage Roll and Summer Fruit Cup. "Smart Snack" will consist of Fried Mini Pizza, Meaty Buns, Nutri Muffins and Fresh Fruit Shakes.

Visit the Maya Kitchen on the 8/F Liberty Building, 835 Pasay Road, Makati, or call 892-5011 to 20 or 892-1185, local 108 or 109.

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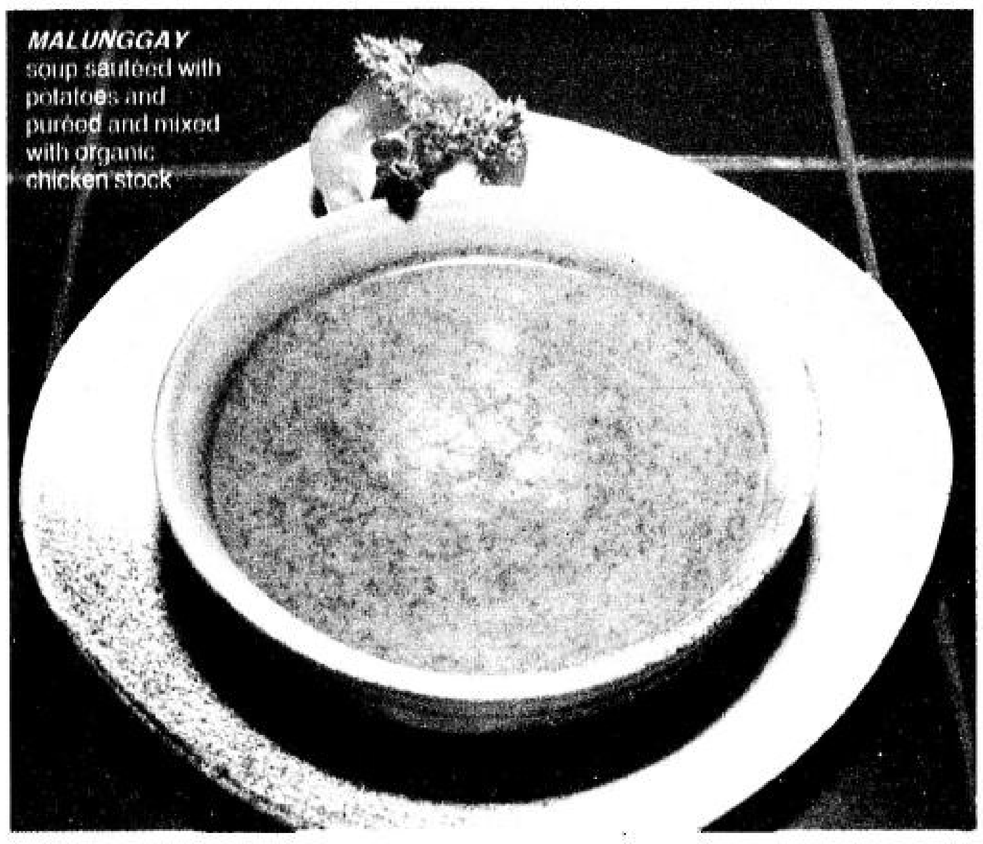
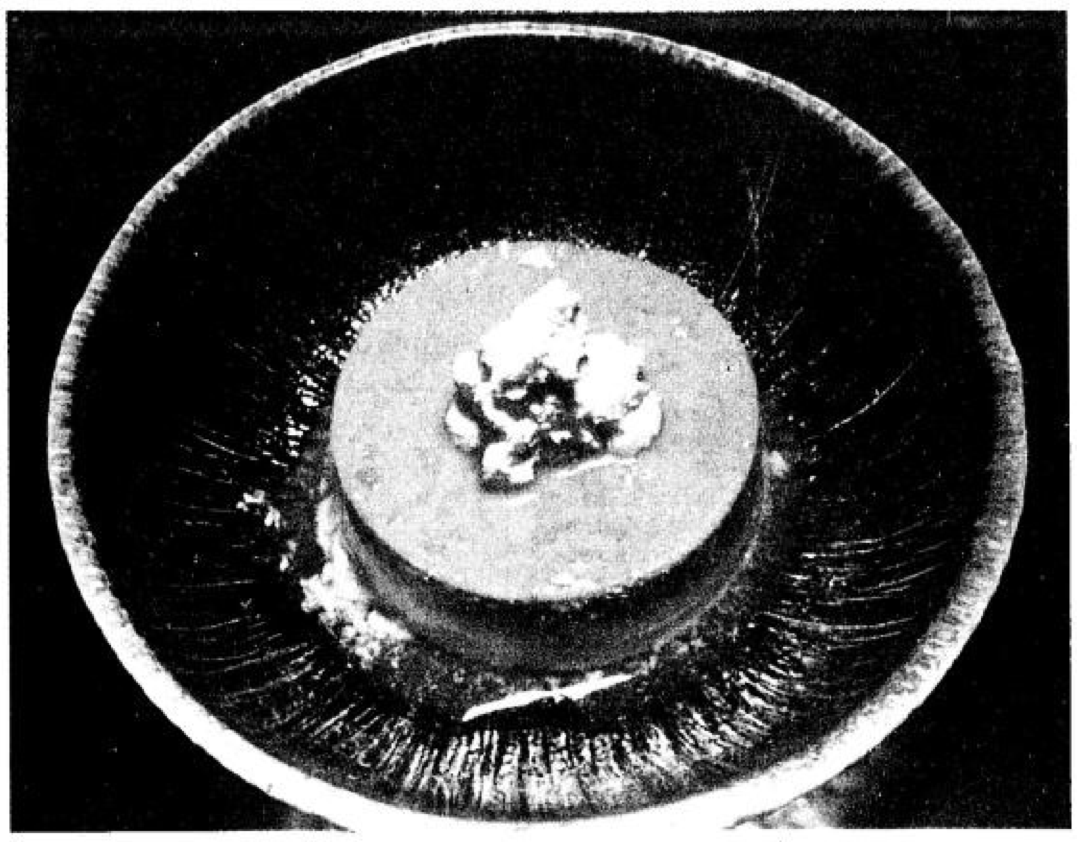


MALUNGGAY soup sautéed with potatoes and puréed and mixed with organic chicken stock

Most of the dishes at this café are Asian with a European twist and made of organic ingredients whenever possible



LECHE flan made of farm-fresh organic eggs and milk

Organic pleasures

(From page C1)

ens and livestock are raised in their natural habitats, free from unnatural feeds (read: fishmeal and sheep innards), growth hormones and antibiotics.

Alleje, for instance, claims to use only freshly dressed free-range chickens over commercially sold varieties. Apart from being free from medicines and hormones, these birds imbibe the elements while they roam freely outside the coop.

Not only are organic foods safe for human consumption, they also satisfy people's hunger while providing them with maximum nutritional benefits. Eating organic, however, goes beyond that.

"It means producing something without destroying something else," says Alleje. "In this case, the environment. Chemicals and pesticides we normally use in our food find their way in the environment."

But the "o" word is also synonymous to good taste. First-time customers are surprised at how *sarap* (delicious) Grapevine's food is, Alleje boasts.

Among Grapevine's specialties are mixed vegetable salad with *kesong puti*, greens with lemon vinaigrette and boneless Dagupeña *bangus* with basil Swiss quark sauce and served with brown rice.

The *malunggay* soup—yes, sautéed with potatoes, pureed and mixed with homemade chicken stock—is an ideal example of a dish developed from local ingredients and adopted to foreigners' taste. Alleje whipped up the soup herself during a cooking demo for French women.

"It's like most of the dishes we serve here," she explains. "They're mostly Asian in origin with a certain European twist."

Memories of home, through such dishes as the Swiss schueblig, also abound. The hearty sausage is served with bread, Swiss-style potato salad and Swiss rosti. *Lapu-lapu* fillet comes pan-fried with dill and served with buttered potatoes, steamed to bring out the flavor.

Alleje also developed a full line of pasta dishes served either in tomato, pesto, carbonara or seafood sauce topped with Ricotta cheese. Angel's hair, spaghetti or fettuccini? The choice is yours.

The team of cooks, headed by a Filipino chef, also whips up different set menus every day, complete with soup and dessert, for P380. The caramelized pineapple with Swiss quark cinnamon ice cream leaves you refreshed without feeling the guilt. The *leche flan* is cooked from organic milk and eggs.

Despite the minimal use of salt and the absence of any tinge of MSG—it's an organic place, remember?—the dishes are surprisingly tasty and light on the palate. The *bangus* and *lapu-lapu*, for instance, don't have any fishy aftertaste. And so do the poultry dishes.

Local sources

"Commercial chickens are usually fed fishmeal diets for their protein requirements," Alleje explains. "The chickens may not notice what's in their food, but their meat becomes *malansa* when cooked."

What about the beef? You'll probably rave about Grapevine's meat dishes without going "mad." The beef, she assures, is sourced locally and not from abroad, especially not from her native Europe. Grapevine also caters to groups with special dietary requirements.

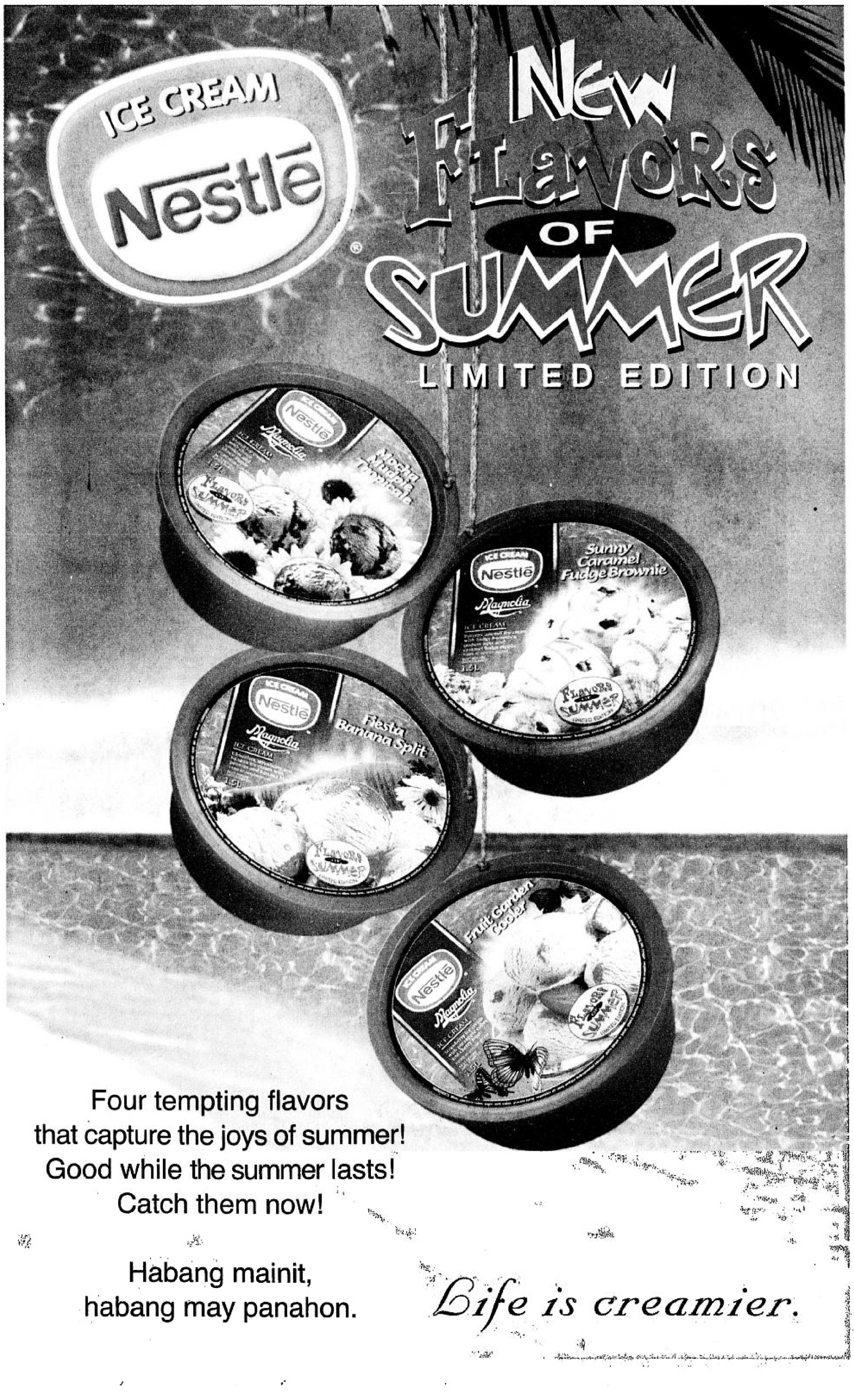
"We may not be a vegetarian restaurant," she says, "but we can prepare a special vegetarian meal as long you give us enough time."

But vegetarian or not, she adds, diners will get only the best and freshest ingredients. Unlike some organic restaurants, Grapevine sources its dairy and poultry needs direct from the family-owned Rizal Dairy Farms in Antipolo.

As an active member of Organic Producers Trade Association of the Philippines, Alleje is also assured of getting a steady supply of fresh vegetables for her kitchen.

Aside from dairy products such as milk, yogurt, butter, mozzarella and regular cheese from Rizal Dairy, she also sells free-range chicken

ORGANIC/ p.C5



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habang may panahon.

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Organic pleasures

JACQUELINE Hassig Alleje and daughter Andrea

(From page C4)

and organically grown vegetables on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

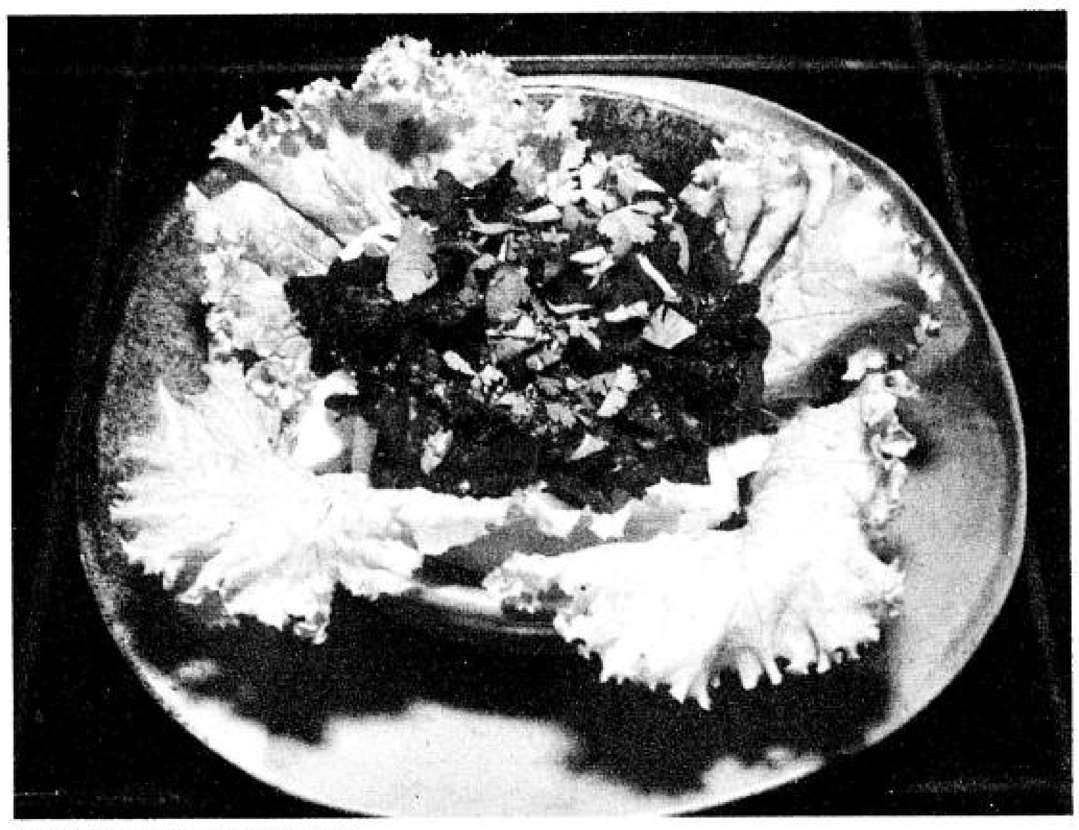
Alleje has been exposed to the food business at an early age. Her grandmother used to own a restaurant back home. In fact, the business management graduate found herself in the Philippines sometime in 1988 to help her father, also named Tony, manage his restaurant in Antipolo called Vieux Chalet. Tony's Filipino widow, Susan Reyes-Hassig, now manages the place.

And you don't have to speak French or English should you have any complaints or suggestions about the food. Alleje speaks Filipino like a native. The former interpreter also speaks German and a sprinkling of Spanish.

"I believe in healing through nutrition," she says. "The health benefits also come back to you care of a healthy environment."

Her fluency in several languages will, no doubt, serve her well as she tries to convince more people of the virtues of going organic.

E-mail the author at avergara@inquirer.com.ph



GREENS with lemon vinaigrette

Cooking classes

THE REGGIE Aspiras School of Culinary Arts, located at BonApetit, 3/F Shangri-La Plaza Mall, announces its classes for this month.

April 6—Food for Conversation 1—deliciously exotic fare consisting of Musti Brown Rice Tea Soup with Condiments (do it yourself), Three Stew Couscous Buffet with Condiments, Indonesian Banana Leaf, Wrapped Barbecue with Nasi Goreng (do it yourself), Rice Flour Crepes with Fillings and Two Sauces.

April 7—Gourmet Filipino 1 "Repeat"—Balut Terrine En Croute, Pandan Lumpia with Candied Walnuts, Grilled Salmon Filipino Style with Seafood Sotanghon in Caviar and Champagne Sauce, Mixed Nut Kare-Kare with Chocolate Bagoong, Patel de Pollo, Pandan Sago Pudding in Creme Anglaise.

April 18—Heavenly Breakfast—Churros con Chocolate "The Real Thing," Poppy Seed and Mixed Citrus Peel Waffles with Homemade Blueberry Sauce, Root Vegetable Porridge with Sweet and Savory Condiments, Empanaditas of Breakfast Meat and Eggs French Toast à la Creme, Strawberry and White Chocolate Chip Pancakes with Dark Chocolate Truffle Syrup, Crisp Korean Maple Bacon with Avocado and Cream Cheese Egg Souffle, Homemade Spiced Pork Sausage Patties with Herb Potatoes, Fresh Fruit Salad Bar with Condiments and Dressing.

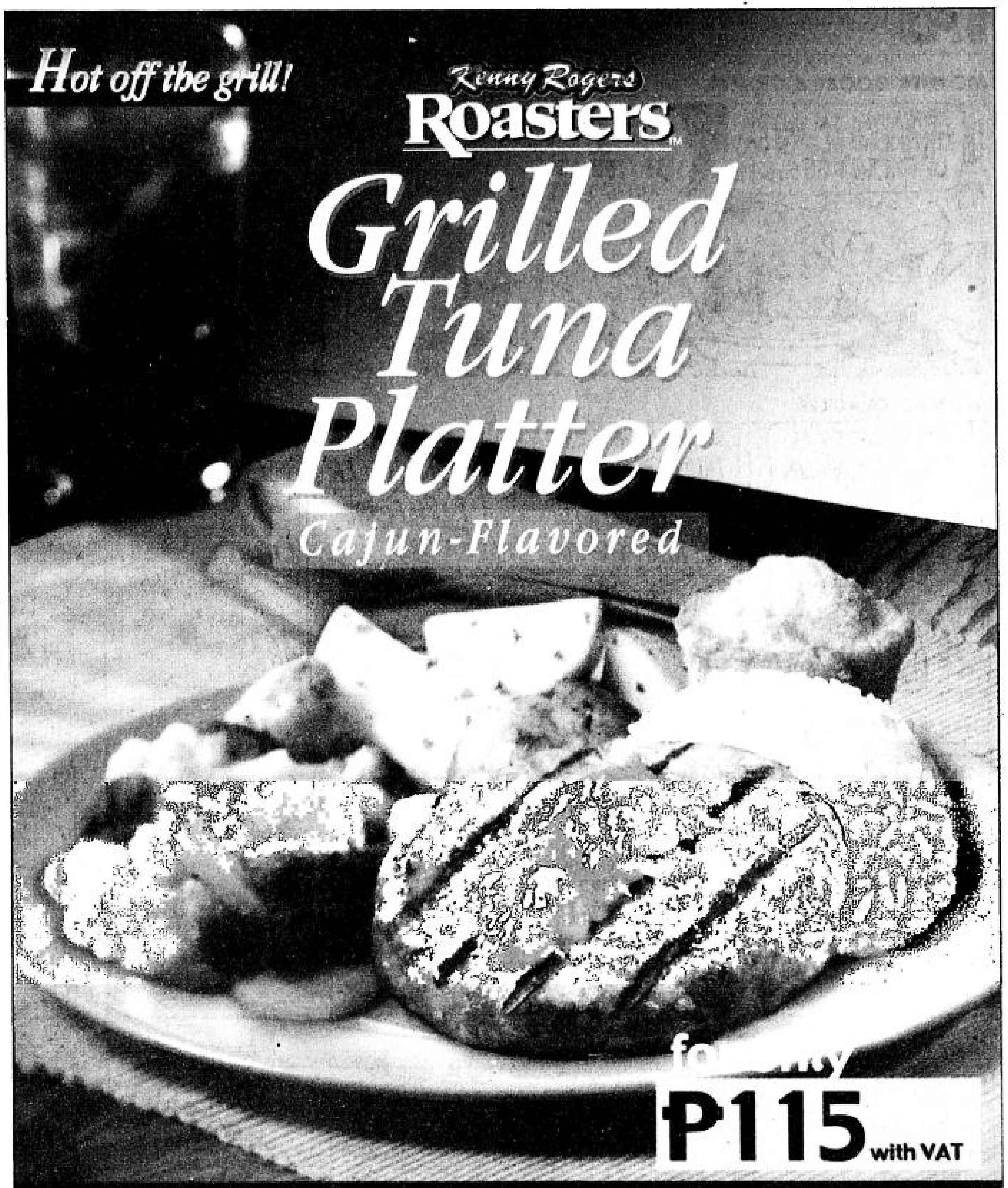
April 20—Latin Fusion Quesadillas, Tortillas and Tacos—Pollo Borracho with Mango Chutney and Homemade Sesame Tortilla, Seasoned Tortilla Chips with Bell Pepper and Eggplant Salsa, Salmon With Melocoton (Peach) Quesadilla, Homemade Latin Flatbreads with Prawns and Garbanzo Cilantro Pesto, Black Pepper Chicken Taco with Curry and Nut Relish, Quesadillas of Spiced Chicken and Caramelized Onions with Aubergines, Homemade Tortillas and Sauces.

April 23—Stews and Casseroles 2—Soup of Wild Rice and Mushroom Casserole, Beef and Currant Stew, Old Fashioned Italian Wine Braised Beef with Polenta, Chicken Okra Casserole with Dumplings of Corn, Mediterranean Rosemary Cornish Hen Stew with Couscous, California Citrus Style Sea Bass and Mixed Sea Food Stew.

April 25—Zesty Citrus Cakes—Rum Cake (two kinds), Orange and Lemon, Grand Marnier and Walnut Cake, Rolled Lemon Pudding, Citrus Hazelnut Torte, Berry Lemon Cake Roll.

April 27—Authentic Japanese 1—Miso Soup with Snow Mushroom Salad, Chawan Mushi (Egg Custard) Sukiyaki, Two Bento Box Meals—Grilled Gindara and Chicken Teriyaki with Side Dishes, Kobe Steak Cooked Misono Style with Dipping Sauces and Japanese Fried Rice, Fruit Gelatin.

Call 634-7464 local 214.



A special all-fish patty made of prime grade, coarse-ground tuna, mouthwatering with its flavorful seasoning and spices, and topped with a mesquite-flavored, chunky tomato sauce.

*From February 27 to April 15, 2001, buy a Nestea Iced Tea with the Tuna Platter and get FREE refills. FOR DINE-IN ONLY

Nestea Take the plunge!

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Per DTI NCR Permit No. 0500 Series of 2001

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Zip down to Shangri-la Plaza on April 6 & 7 for free gifts, fun and entertainment at the HipZip Launch.

Venue: The Shangri-la Plaza - Basement Black Marble Area (Food Court in front of Rustan's Grocery)
Date: April 6 & 7, 2001 Time: 11am to 9pm
Our special guest band, Real Groove, will be performing on April 7 at 6pm.

Bring this ad and you'll get a FREE mystery gift

Participating dealers: • Microstation • Accent Micro Products • Electroworld • Silicon Valley

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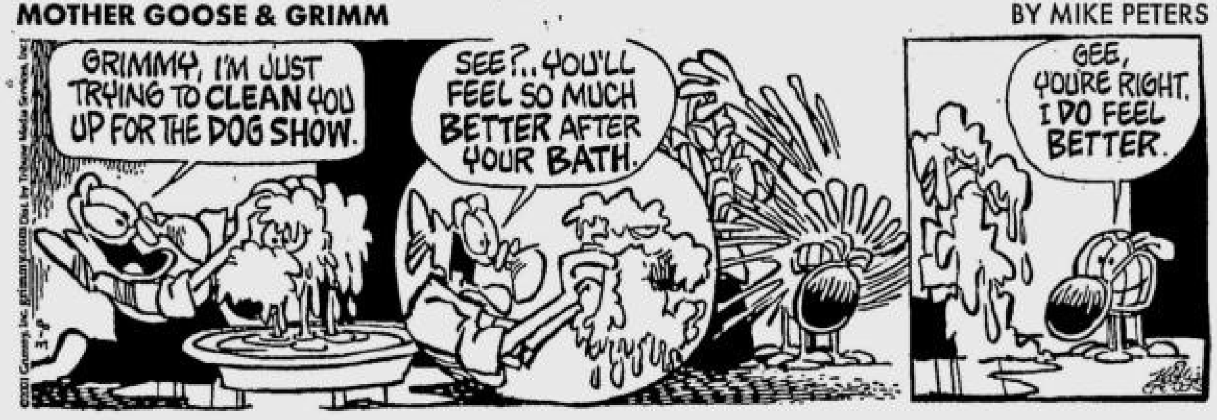
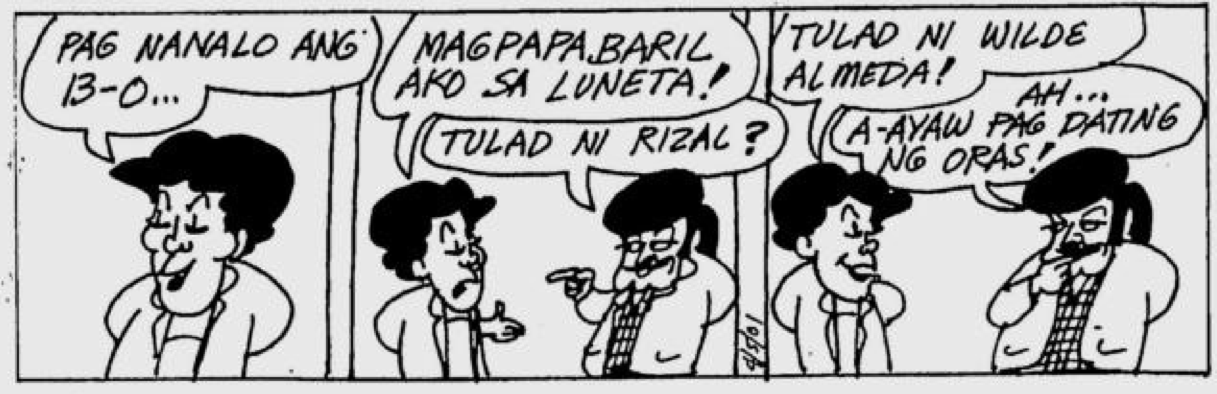
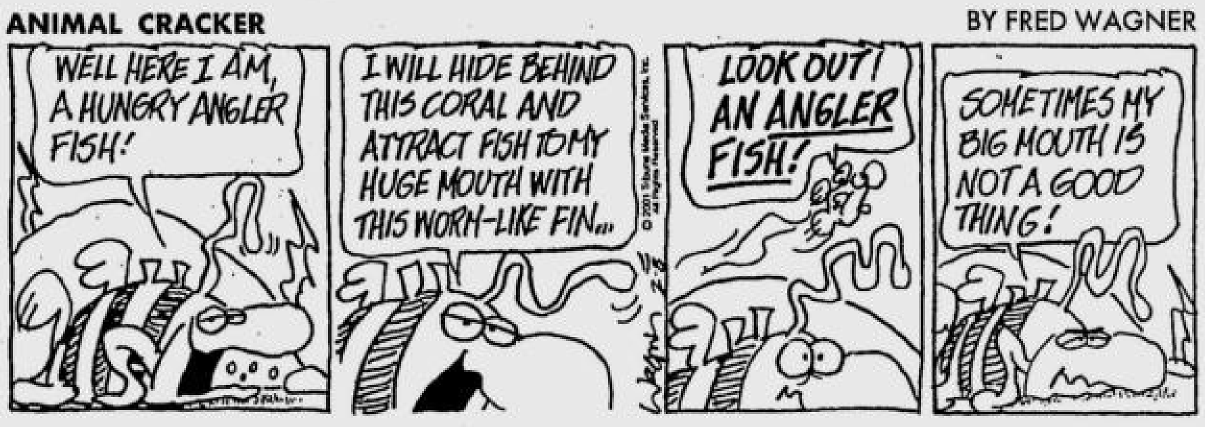
MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM BY MIKE PETERS


GRIMMY, I'M JUST TRYING TO CLEAN YOU UP FOR THE DOG SHOW.
SEE?.. YOU'LL FEEL SO MUCH BETTER AFTER YOUR BATH.
GEE, YOU'RE RIGHT. I DO FEEL BETTER.

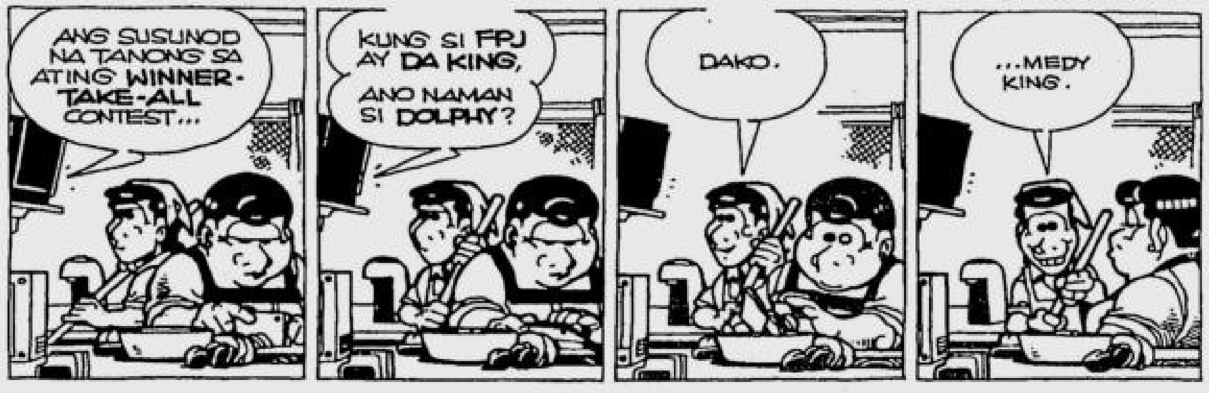
A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA


PAG NANALO ANG 13-0...
MAGPAPA.BARIL AKO SA LUNETA!
TULAD NI RIZAL?
TULAD NI WILDE ALMEDA!
AH... A-AYAW PAG DATING NG ORAS!

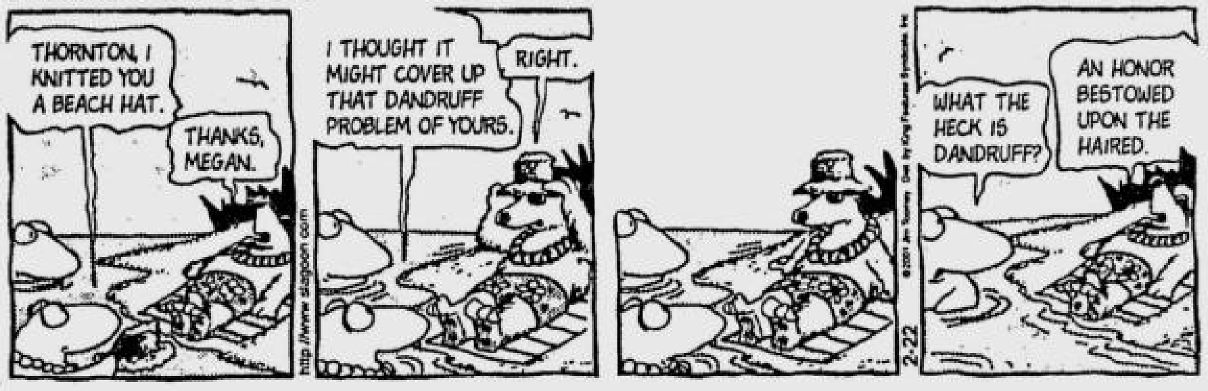
ANIMAL CRACKER BY FRED WAGNER


WELL HERE I AM, A HUNGRY ANGLER FISH!
I WILL HIDE BEHIND THIS CORAL AND ATTRACT FISH TO MY HUGE MOUTH WITH THIS WORM-LIKE FIN...
LOOK OUT! AN ANGLER FISH!
SOMETIMES MY BIG MOUTH IS NOT A GOOD THING!

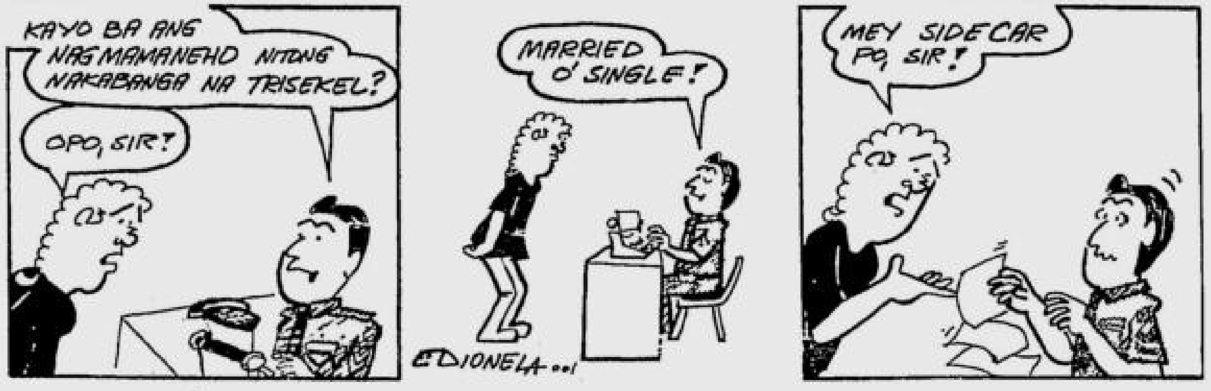
PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR


ANG SUSUNOD NA TANONG SA ATING WINNER-TAKE-ALL CONTEST...
KUNG SI FPJ AY DA KING, ANO NAMAN SI DOLPHY?
DAKO.
...MEDY KING.

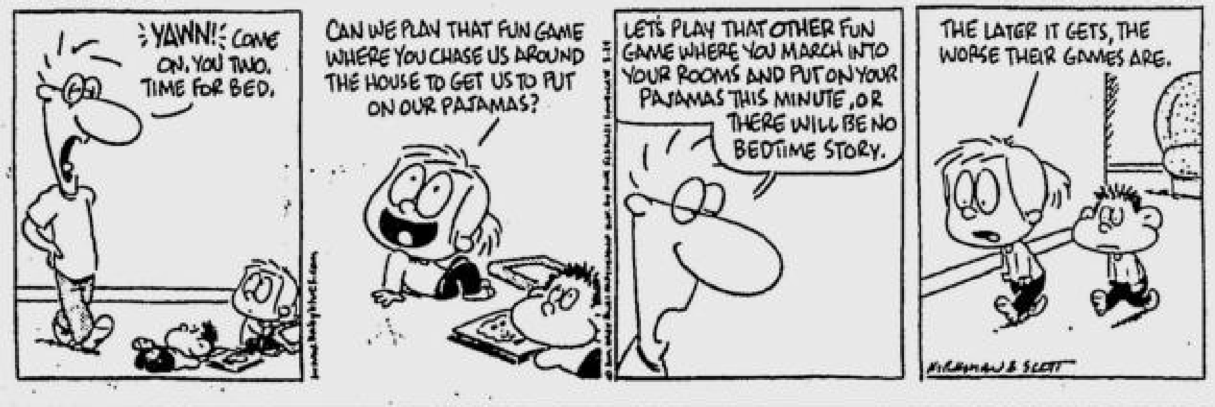
SHERMAN'S LAGOON BY JIM TOOMEY


THORNTON, I KNITTED YOU A BEACH HAT.
THANKS, MEGAN.
I THOUGHT IT MIGHT COVER UP THAT DANDRUFF PROBLEM OF YOURS.
RIGHT.
WHAT THE HECK IS DANDRUFF?
AN HONOR BESTOWED UPON THE HAIRED.
http://www.slagoon.com
2-22

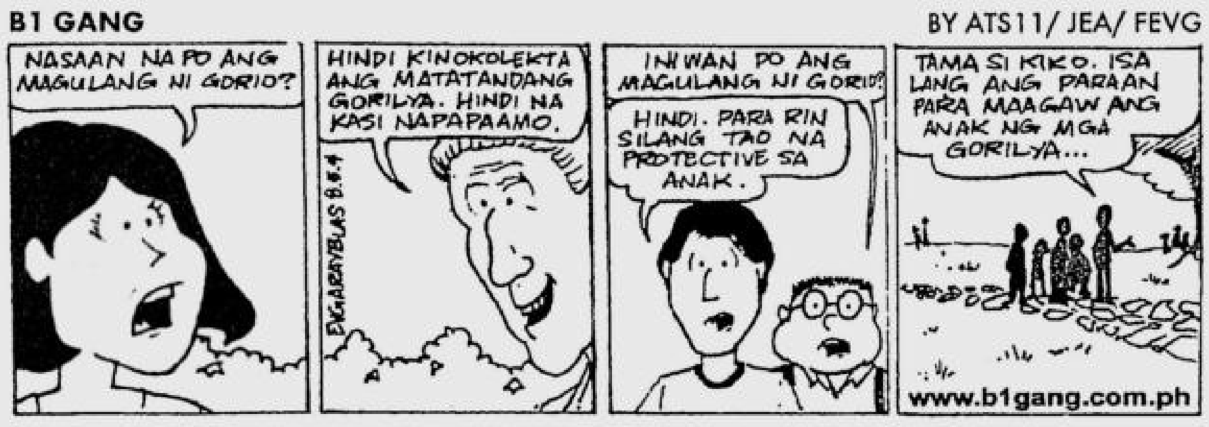
SIMO BY EDGAR DIONELA


KAYO BA ANG NAGMAMANEHO NITONG NAKABANGA NA TRISEKEL?
OPO, SIR!
MARRIED O' SINGLE!
EDIONELA
MEY SIDECAR PO, SIR!

BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT


YAWN! COME ON, YOU TWO. TIME FOR BED.
CAN WE PLAY THAT FUN GAME WHERE YOU CHASE US AROUND THE HOUSE TO GET US TO PUT ON OUR PAJAMAS?
LET'S PLAY THAT OTHER FUN GAME WHERE YOU MARCH INTO YOUR ROOMS AND PUT ON YOUR PAJAMAS THIS MINUTE, OR THERE WILL BE NO BEDTIME STORY.
THE LATER IT GETS, THE WORSE THEIR GAMES ARE.
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

B1 GANG BY ATS11/ JEA/ FEVG


NASAAN NA PO ANG MAGULANG NI GORIO?
HINDI KINOKOLEKTA ANG MATATANDANG GORILYA. HINDI NA KASI NAPAPAAMO.
EVGARAYBLAS
INIWAN PO ANG MAGULANG NI GORIO?
HINDI. PARA RIN SILANG TAO NA PROTECTIVE SA ANAK.
TAMA SI KIKO. ISA LANG ANG PARAAN PARA MAAGAW ANG ANAK NG MGA GORILYA...
www.b1gang.com.ph

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Gregory Peck, Colin Powell, Spencer Tracy, Bette Davis, Paula Cole, Max Gail

Happy Birthday: Don't let emotional matters cloud your vision this year. You have to deal with everything promptly to keep the coast clear for any opportunity that comes your way. If you can keep a clear head, you will know exactly what you have to do to get ahead: You will not miss a beat if you keep on your toes and prepare to make your move as soon as you get wind of any promising project. Your numbers: 1, 23, 27, 30, 41, 44

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Don't let your emotions stand in the way of professional progress. Hold your temper when dealing with individuals who are critical or negative. You mustn't be daunted by what others think.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Get out and socialize. Romantic connections can be made. You'll attract all sorts of individuals. Use discrimination if they want you to pay their way.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): You're trying to do too many things for too many people. Step back and be realistic about your projects. You won't be able to please everyone. Your creative talent will be recognized.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Don't let friends or relatives interfere in your love relationship. Make up your own mind. Ask your mate point-blank if you feel that he or she has lost interest or if you want to clear the air.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Make your move. A higher-paying job offer should be considered even if it means making a residential move. You may like the people you are working for, but money talks.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Don't back your mate into a corner. He or she may not be ready to discuss existing problems. Be patient: Pushing will only cause him or her to back away or say things you'll both regret.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Help those less fortunate than you. You will feel great if you can do a friend a favor. Investments will pay off. Don't be afraid to take a bit of a chance.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): You can ask for favors and get sound advice from close friends and relatives. Don't hesitate to entertain those who can provide you with valuable information and knowledge.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): You won't be feeling up to par if you've been burning the candle at both ends. Take time to rejuvenate. You may want to look into a career change that promises a higher income.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): You need to put some spark back into your life. New friends, different types of entertainment and fitness programs should help you turn things around. You need to feel as if you're achieving.

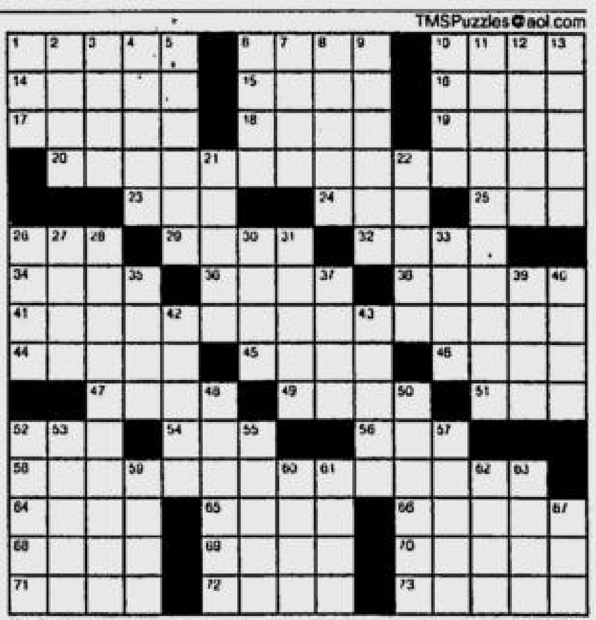
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Finalize important details. Make changes to your personal papers that will bring you up to date and on top of your financial situation. Don't neglect overdue bills.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Your mate is not likely to understand your position. Don't beat around the bush; state your case and explain your intentions. You need time to make things better. Try not to take each other for granted.

Birthday Baby: You won't miss a thing. You are attentive, caring and extremely observant. You notice even the smallest of details and will always give your best effort in all that you do.

DAILY CROSSWORD

TMSPuzzles@aol.com


By Randall J. Hartman
Escondido, CA
2/20/01

ACROSS
1 Abrupt inhalations
6 Natural incubator
10 Old-time kiss
14 Of intestines
15 Ended
16 Med. course
17 Geekish
18 Behind time
19 Icelandic saga
20 Boxer's deformation
23 To a man
24 "__ the land..."
25 Map abbr.
26 Light knock
29 Brought to maturity
32 Frees (of)
34 Jai __
36 Envelop
38 "The Purple People __"
41 Nebraska
44 Aquarium resident
45 London gallery
46 Not pro
47 Moonwalker Armstrong
49 Paper quantity
51 Father
52 "__ Maria"
54 Earl Grey, e.g.
56 __ Vegas
58 Frank Zappa's record label
64 Actress Lena
65 Toothy smile
66 Type of closet
68 Have supper
69 Set up for a drive
70 Roast host
71 Transition point
72 Medal of Honor recipient
73 Digging tool

DOWN
1 Tonic's partner
2 Actor Baldwin
3 Antitoxins
4 University where Galileo taught
5 Partner of Charybdis
6 Nicholson film
7 Track shape
8 I want to also
9 Milwaukee player
10 Max of "The Beverly Hillbillies"
11 Comprehend.
12 Nasser successor
13 Gawk
21 Female labor grp.
22 Iroquois tribe
26 Diplomacy
27 __ vera
28 Working as a couple
30 Formerly, formerly
31 Capital of Senegal
33 Computer input
35 As to
37 Sampras or Seeger
39 R & B singer James
40 Tim or Beryl
42 Part of Hispaniola
43 Kingdom
48 Distance from beginning to end
50 Syrup sources
52 Dwelling
53 In force
55 Say yes
57 Cut corners
59 Leg joint
60 Place of warship?
61 Bring to ruin
62 Andes autocrat
63 Requirement
67 Born in Paris

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

S	P	I	T	S	■	W	A	D	■	C	R	A	N	K
A	R	N	I	E	■	O	R	R	■	H	A	G	U	E
P	O	L	K	A	D	O	T	S	■	I	C	I	N	G
P	R	A	I	R	I	E	■	■	S	L	I	T	■	■
H	A	Y	■	■	G	R	A	N	T	I	N	A	I	D
I	T	E	M	S	■	S	M	E	E	■	E	T	N	A
C	E	R	A	T	O	■	I	T	A	L	■	E	N	D
■	■	■	B	A	B	U	S	H	K	A	S	■	■	■
A	L	P	■	N	E	S	T	■	S	P	A	S	M	S
G	O	A	T	■	R	E	A	L	■	S	T	E	A	M
O	U	T	O	F	O	R	D	E	R	■	■	A	L	E
■	■	S	P	A	N	■	■	R	E	G	A	T	T	A
E	P	I	C	S	■	W	E	N	T	A	F	T	E	R
T	R	E	A	T	■	O	R	E	■	F	A	L	S	E
C	O	S	T	S	■	E	A	R	■	F	R	E	E	D

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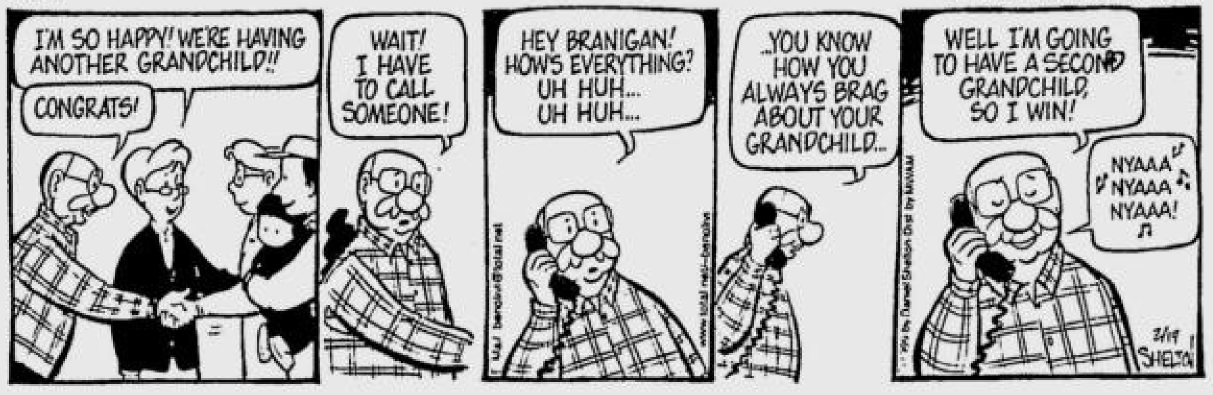
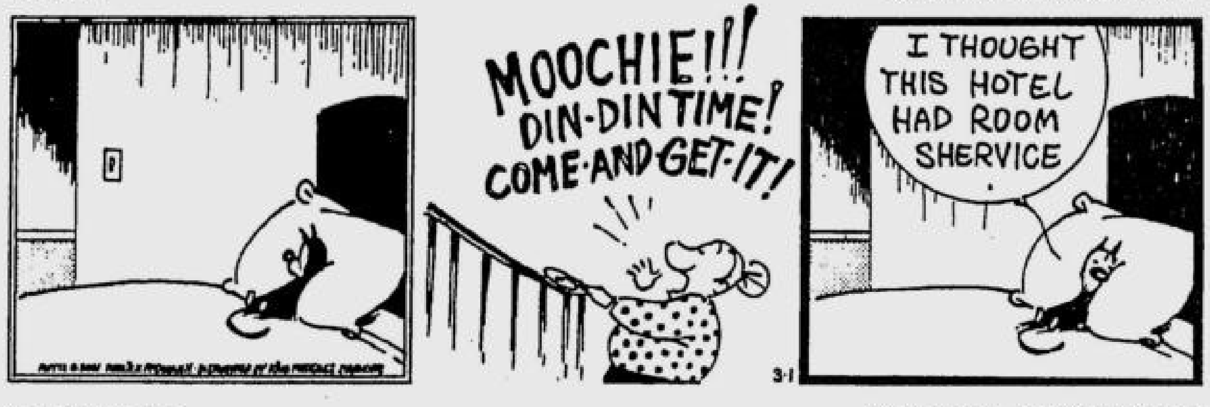
2/20/01

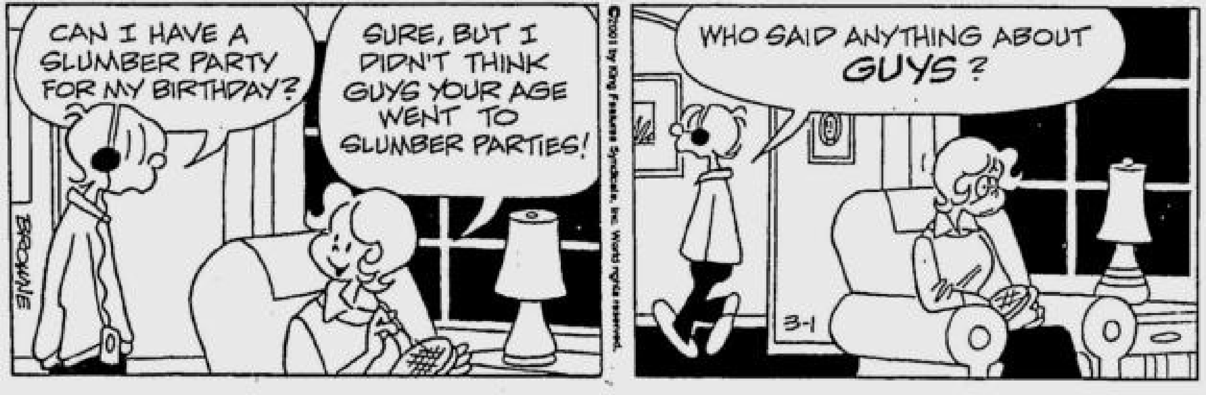
BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON


I'M SO HAPPY! WE'RE HAVING ANOTHER GRANDCHILD!!
CONGRATS!
WAIT! I HAVE TO CALL SOMEONE!
HEY BRANIGAN! HOW'S EVERYTHING? UH HUH... UH HUH...
...YOU KNOW HOW YOU ALWAYS BRAG ABOUT YOUR GRANDCHILD...
WELL I'M GOING TO HAVE A SECOND GRANDCHILD, SO I WIN!
NYAAA NYAAA NYAAA!
3/19 SHELTON

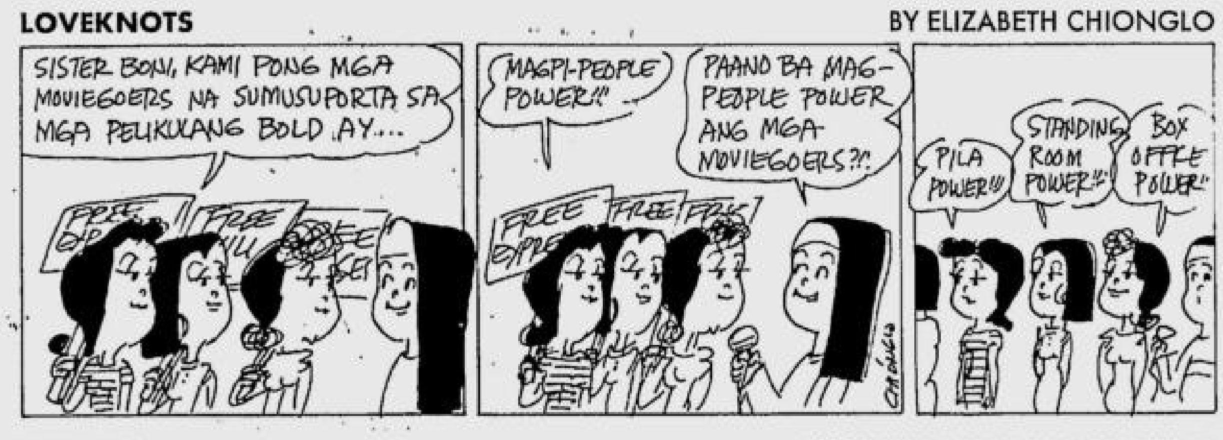
MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL


MOOCHIE!!! DIN-DIN TIME! COME-AND-GET-IT!
I THOUGHT THIS HOTEL HAD ROOM SHERVICE
3-1

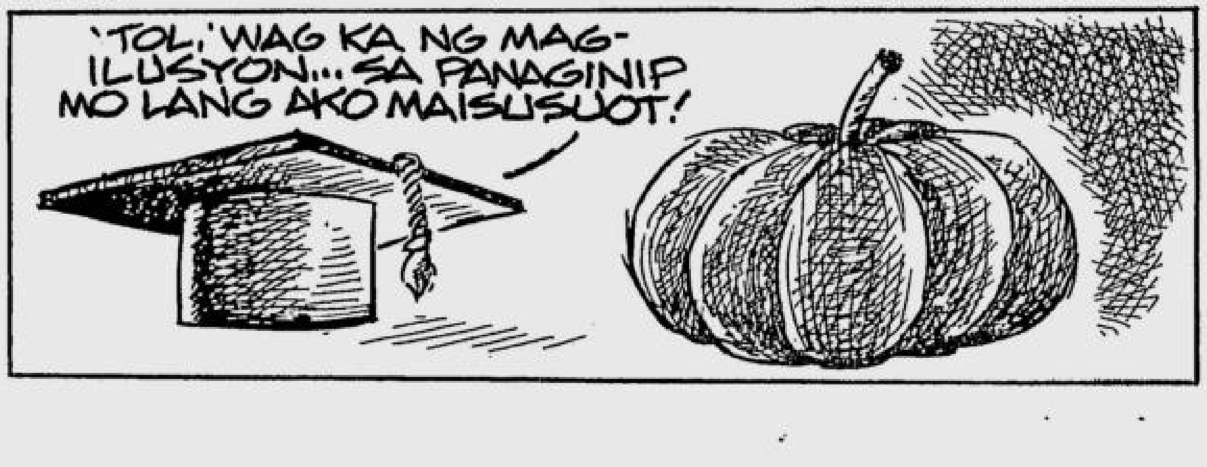
HI AND LOIS BY BRIAN & GREG WALKER


CAN I HAVE A SLUMBER PARTY FOR MY BIRTHDAY?
SURE, BUT I DIDN'T THINK GUYS YOUR AGE WENT TO SLUMBER PARTIES!
WHO SAID ANYTHING ABOUT GUYS?
BROWNE
3-1

LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


SISTER BONI, KAMI PONG MGA MOVIEGOERS NA SUMUSUPORTA SA MGA PELIKULANG BOLD AY....
MAGPI-PEOPLE POWER!!
PAANO BA MAG-PEOPLE POWER ANG MGA MOVIEGOERS?!
PILA POWER!!!
STANDING ROOM POWER!!
BOX OFFICE POWER!!
FREE

TULDOK BY PAPU & TATUM MILAMBILING


'TOL, 'WAG KA NG MAG-ILUSYON... SA PANAGINIP MO LANG AKO MAISUSUOT!

It's the season for seafood again

JUST in time for Lent, the New World Renaissance Hotel showcases a Seafood Market promotion at Bocarinos Restaurant. Fresh seafood and shellfish such as prawns, lobsters and *lapu-lapu* are available. Call 811-6888.

CENTURY PARK. The Café in the Park lunch and dinner buffets are themed "Neptune's Wharf" on Mondays, "Taste of California" on Tuesdays, "Ranch Corner" on Wednesdays and Fridays, "Filipino Favorites" on Thursdays and "Orient Express" on Saturdays. Call 528-8888, local 5907.

DINING-OUT

SALO. Indulge in Salo's best-selling Spicy Crab Claws, a hodge podge of garlic, ginger, oyster sauce, shallots, soy sauce and a special marinade with chili powder. This Malaysian dish comes with a sweet chili sauce. Salo recently opened along Sgt. Esguerra Street, QC. Their seasoned chefs bring together favorites from different countries like Thailand's Phad Thai, Thai Pomelo Salad and Tom Yam Goong; Indonesia and Malaysia's Rendang, and Korea's Beef Satay.

GOLD RANCH. Savor a plethora of luscious seafood dishes, starting off with deep-fried prawns on toast, gratinated mussels on a bed of sautéed spinach or salmon and kohlrabi millefeuille. Gold Ranch is located along Arnaiz Avenue (formerly Pasay Road), Makati City and is open daily from 11:20 a.m.-2:30 p.m. for lunch and 6:30-11:30 p.m. for dinner.

HOLIDAY INN. Authentic Oriental salmon feast at the Pavilion Court until April 28. Salmon offerings include Smoked Salmon Salad or Samurai Salmon Salad, Fresh Salmon Head Soup, Emperor Soup and Salmon Wanton. For the main dish, try the Sautéed Sliced Salmon, Braised Fresh Salmon in Clay Pot, Mango Salmon and Golden Mile Salmon, among others. Available for lunch and dinner. Call 526-1212, locals 2303 and 2503.

OLIVER'S. Newest addition to the line of sandwiches are Thai Tuna and Mediterranean Tuna. Rediscover Oliver's fresh seafood sandwich line like Crabstick, Sardine and Pickles, Tuna Mayo, Smoked Salmon and Smoked Salmon with Cheese. Try its pasta in spicy-sweet no meat bolognese sauce made from a unique blend of herbs and spices with anchovies.

CRAVINGS. The Ice Cream Bar, a collection of ice cream flavors, is available until April 15. A cool tie-up with Arce Dairy, the ice cream corner features different flavors and a variety of toppings. Cravings outlets are located in Katipunan, Wilson Street, Greenhills, Robinsons Place and Shangri-La Mall.

HOLIDAY INN. A festival of Spanish provincial cooking runs until April 14 at The Rotisserie. Executive chef Martin Kohler prepares the Spanish à la carte menu, from Aperitivos to Sopas, Platos Principales and Postres. Sample specialties include Bunuelos de Bacalao (cod fritters with garlic and olive oil, served with red pimientos sauce); Sopa de Ajo Casa Irene (flavorful broth with roasted garlic and quail eggs); Filet de Res Al Cabrales (beef tenderloin gratinated with blue cheese and served with dry sherry sauce); and for dessert, Filloas à la Crema (baked custard-filled crepes, flamed with anisette). Call 526-1212, local 2505.

CASA ARMAS. Guests can now enjoy a lunch set menu that starts with appetizing Sopa de Ajo or Ensalada del Cesar, followed by a main course choice of Pescado à la Vizcaina, Salpicado or Pollo Frito Especial, Flan al Caramelo for dessert, plus coffee or tea. Casa Armas is located at 132 Jupiter St., Bel-Air Village, Makati City. Call 897-3605 /3542.

Il PONTICELLO. Savor Rome's cuisine through Italian dishes like Fettuce alla Chitarra (grilled chicken slices served atop a bed of fresh hand-made pasta Tagliatelle in mushroom porcini cream sauce); Pasta e Bigne con le Ostriche (pasta with deep-fried vegetables and oysters in cream puffs); and Saltimbocca alla Romana (seared thin sliced veal lain with Parma ham in white wine and olive oil). The Roman Food Festival runs until July. Il Ponticello is located at the 2/F, Antel 2000, Valero Street, Salcedo Village, Makati. Call 887-7168/ 4998.

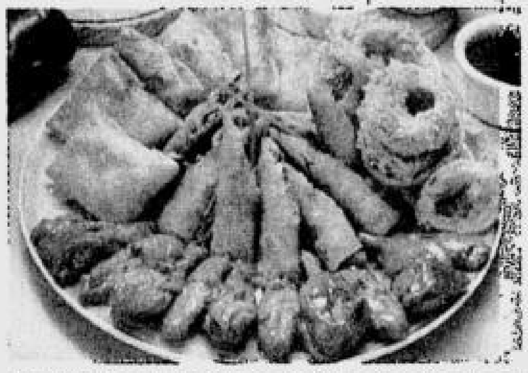
Fusing tropical flavors

TROPICAL Forest now offers fusion cuisine in Ermita, Manila. Among the hit dishes are Calamari Crunch (breaded, deep-fried squid served with honey dijon sauce), Forest Wings (fried chicken wings glazed with hot and spicy sauce served with carrot and celery sticks with blue cheese dressing), Baked New Zealand Mussels (mussels baked into the richness of Parmesan cheese and hollandaise with garlic and a dash of marinara sauce).

Their menu also includes delicious entrées such as Jambalaya (long grain rice flavored with saffron and anato seeds mixed with prawn, squid, chicken, pork and red and green bell pepper), Chicken Curry with Pappadam (slices of succulent chicken cooked in curry powder flavored with lemongrass) and Hainanese Chicken (boiled chicken in its own juice with ginger sauce, soya sauce and chili sauce served with steamed rice) among others.

Tropical Forest, on T. M. Kalaw Street, is open for lunch and dinner. Call 400-7438 or 39.

MEATLESS TREATS. THIS Lenten season, Don Henrico's offers meatless dishes. Inspired by Mexican cuisine, Don Henrico's has created Shrimp and Mango Quesadilla and Crab and Tomato Quesadilla, two meatless treats that feature soft flour tortilla with mouth-watering fillings and served with sour cream.



SUPER Sampler will be available for free to all new grads who dine at Burgoo with a party of 10 people and more. Super Sampler is a huge platter of appetizers composed of Chimichanga, Buffalo Chicken Wings, Onion Rings and Sta. Fe Spring Rolls. Offer is good until April 27.

BAYVIEW. This month, Bayview Park Hotel offers fresh from the grill-skewered specialties. Served from Mondays to Fridays, 6-10 p.m., the buffet carries a variety of barbecue items, chicken and pork *satay* plus salads and desserts. The Tea Lounge offers the Afternoon Tea Delights promo for only P125. Have a taste of servings in its various stations of *Mexican Tacos, Sandwich Bar, Shabu-shabu and Lumpia.* Available from Mondays-Fridays, 3-6 p.m. Call 526-1555 or 522-3040.

CHOPSTIX EXPRESS. To add more variety to the dim sum buffet, Chopstix has included noodle soup, rice toppings, congee, roastings and other fried items for P188. Promo, which runs until April 30, is available to dine-in customers daily from 2 p.m.-6 p.m. and 10 p.m.-12 mn at Chopstix on Wilson St., Greenhills. Chopstix also serves Japanese and Korean dishes, like sashimi, sushis, teppanyaki, tempura and Korean BBQ.

The glory of Italian food where you shop

NOW open at 2/L Glorietta IV in Makati City is Italianni's Bakery & Café. Service is friendly and efficient and the ambiance, warm and inviting.

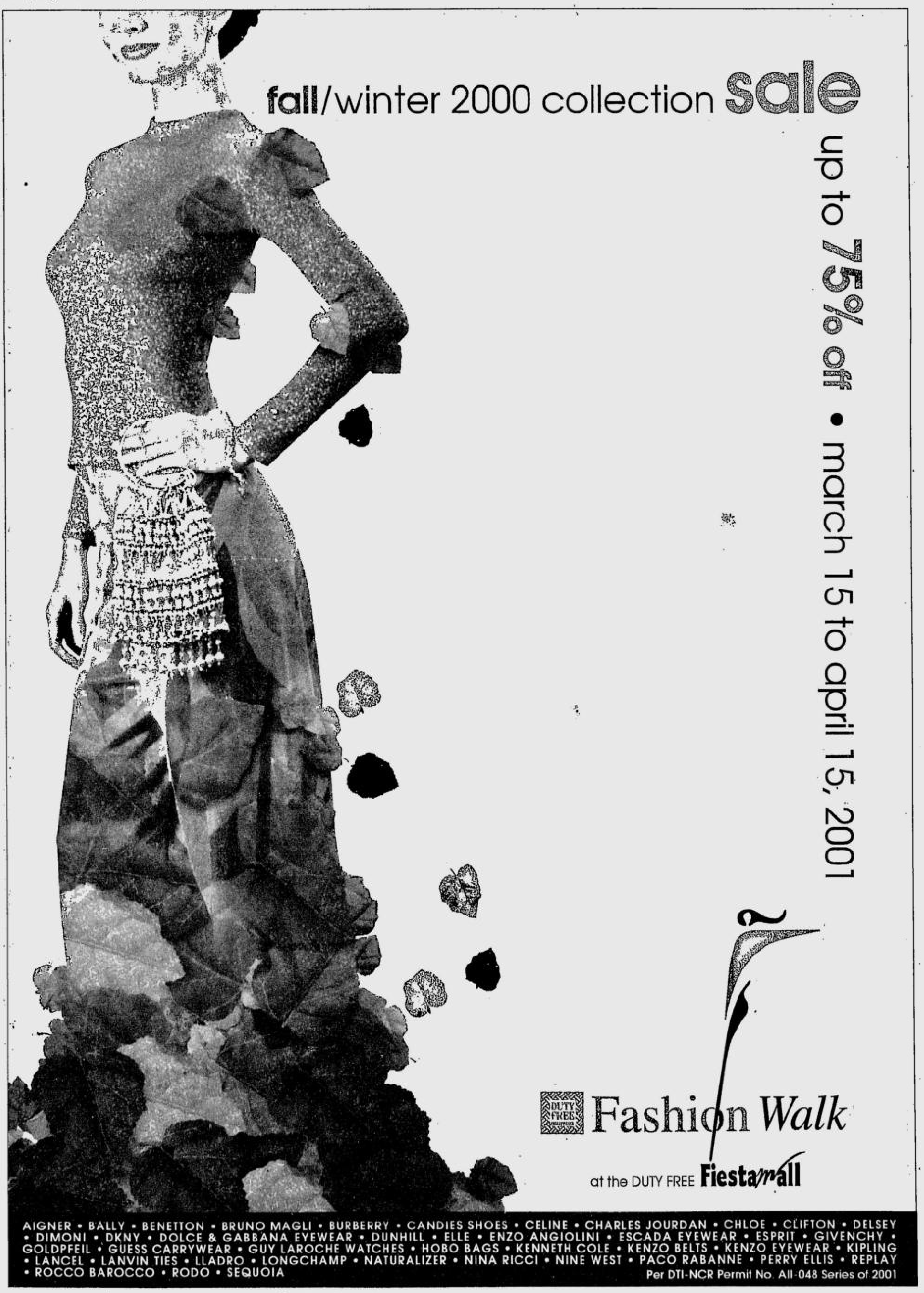
The 80-seater bakery-café has comfortable seating with brown and green tables and chairs that lend a casual, old-world charm. Trademark Italianni's decor such as framed black-and-white and sepia photographs are festooned on the wall.

A small kitchen has been included to ensure that the food is served fresh and hot. For those who want to relax and stay a little longer, there's a cozy bar that serves your sodas, fruit juices, coffee, tea, beer and wine.

Available for appetizer are Spinach and Artichoke Formaggio and Toasted Ravioli, among others. The house specialty, Herb Roasted Chicken Italianni's, is on the menu as well as pasta specialties Angel Hair Pomodoro, Shrimp Linguine and Manicotti Bolognese, to mention a few. The different varieties of Calzone (barbecue chicken, adobo, seafood and pepperoni) are likewise highly recommended.

Freshly baked bread and pastries include Focaccia and Tuscan bread with balsamic vinegar and olive oil dip, Blueberry Muffins, Chunky Chocolate Muffins, Giant and Small Chunky Choco Chip Cookies and more.

Italianni's Bakery & Café is designed to satisfy your cravings throughout the day, seven days a week, before or after a shopping spree.



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at the DUTY FREE Fiestamall
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* Air Fare & Hotel Accommodations courtesy of Cebu Pacific.

Prizes

- 1 winner gets a free trip for 4 from Cebu to Manila with 3 days/2 nights accommodations at the Manila Midtown Hotel.
- 1 winner gets a free trip for 4 from Davao to Manila with 3days/2 nights accommodations at the Manila Midtown Hotel.
- 4 winners get a free trip for 4 from Manila to Cebu with 3 days/2 nights accommodations at the Cebu Midtown Hotel.
- 4 winners get a free trip for 4 from Manila to Davao with 3 days/2 nights accommodations at the Linmar Hotel.

Promo Mechanics

1. For every P150 purchase at any Shakey's outlet nationwide, you get a certified Shakey's "Food 'N' Fun Trips Passport" with pages that correspond to specific promotional food items.
2. Indicate your name, address, contact number(s) and signature on the Passport.
3. Upon purchase of specified passport food items on your succeeding visits to any Shakey's outlet, have your passport food item stamped and validated by the restaurant manager.
4. Drop completely stamped & validated Passports at any Shakey's outlet nationwide. Sealed drop boxes shall be collected one day after the deadline for dropping of entries and brought to the Shakey's Head Office for safekeeping under the custody of the Marketing Dept. A DTI representative will be invited to be present in the opening of drop boxes and during the drawing of winners.
5. Promo period is from April 5 to June 30, 2001. Deadline for dropping of entries is on June 30, 2001. Winners will be drawn on July 13, 2001, 6 p.m. at the Shakey's Head Office (2/F Sample Shop, AFP-RSBS Industrial Park, Km 12 East Service Rd., cor. C-5, South Superhighway, Taguig, M.M.
6. Winners will be notified by registered mail. Raffle participants can only win once per draw. Should a name be drawn more than once, he/she gets the prize of higher value.
7. Prizes must be redeemed within 60 days from notification and will be valid until Dec. 15, 2001 excluding the week of Oct. 30 - Nov 5. GMA winners can redeem their prizes at the Shakey's Head Office. Provincial winners may claim their prize from a Shakey's representative at the outlet where the winning entry was dropped.
8. Prizes are transferable but not convertible to cash.
9. 20% tax for prizes exceeding P10,000.00 shall be shouldered by Shakey's.
10. Shakey's will not shoulder any incidental expenses incurred by the winners.
11. Employees of Shakey's and Corplan including relatives up to the 2nd degree of consanguinity or affinity are disqualified from joining.
12. Promo valid for dine-in and take-out only.

Better than ever!

Promo period: April 5 to June 30, 2001.
Take-out plus box charges.
Per DTI NCR Permit # 0407 Series of 2001.

Nestlé
www.shakeyspizza.ph

ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

Dining with men who play God

UNUSUAL and extremely successful was the dinner Chef Ed Quimson gave for his doctors "to thank them for taking care of my heart." They were all there, Dr. George Garcia, who did the quintuple bypass, the anesthesiologist and the rest of the team. It was set in the Brada Gallery, Ed's cooking school. "Do doctors have a life?," whispered Nancy Reyes-Lumen. They obviously do. Some stood around as Ed and his partners Ronald Sampaga and Robert "Boy" Aguiles cooked dinner, watching in the mirror. "I want to learn," one said. Others sat down in what had been the office, and that night had flower-centered, white-clad tables.

IN GOOD TASTE

Doreen G. Fernandez

Dietary haute cuisine

Appetizers were passed around: eclairs filled with smoked chicken and sun-dried tomatoes; slender fried *lumpia* stuffed with *tinapa*, sharp cheddar cheese and green mango.

Dinner started exactly at 8, with beautifully plated dishes brought to each guest. First, open ravioli with lightly smoked salmon and fresh vegetables so finely julienned that they looked like strands of greenery and sunlight. One of my favorites was the soup that came next: chicken consommé that tasted as if a whole flock had been distilled into the cup, and on it drops of pumpkin seed oil from Austria, to which Nancy had just introduced Ed.

The salad was another favorite: mesclun with a dressing of yogurt, *kesong puti*, rosemary and tiny watermelon balls. It was inspired by my late husband Wili who, I had told Ed, would dip watermelon into olive oil and salt. Ed tried it, liked it and took it further by designing this dressing.

Cornets of *lapu-lapu* filled with crab mousse came next, on a bi-colored sea of red and green pepper sauces and roasted marble potatoes, all seemingly equal in perfection. By this time, sighs of satisfaction echoed, with an occasional plaintive "We're only halfway through? Will I last?"

To clear the palate for the main entrée, there came an infusion of orange, mango and basil—no ordinary *sorbet* for this chef. It was cold and sweet, and the basil turned it around and made it sparkle.

The main entrées were chicken breasts that had been marinated in Kahlua and pineapple juice before roasting. This was accompanied by

DINING/ p.C3

Please don't be late, the star has to leave by midnight.

The Ayala malls Events

Catch Cinderella Live at the Ayala Malls This Summer.